THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

THE PROBLEM OF CLAUDIUS

SOME ASPECTS OF A CHARACTER STUDY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the
Johns Hopkins University in conformity with
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

1916

BY

THOMAS DECOURSEY RUTH

The Lord Baltimore Press
BALTIMORE, MD., U. S. A.

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INTRODUCTION

It is doubtless a fair statement that wherever Suetonius has been known and read the interest of the student of character in the twelve Cæsars has never been wanting. This is true particularly in the cases of Julius Cæsar and the first five of the Roman emperors, and during the last century, with the rise of science and of scientific method in scholarship, the lives and characters of these men, as of other historic personalities, have been submitted to closer scrutiny and more critical investigation, with the result that we have now a very fair understanding and appreciation of Julius Cæsar [1] and Augustus,[2] and even of Caligula [3] and Nero.[4]

On the other hand, Tiberius and Claudius, particularly the latter, remain perplexing problems. Of the two Tiberius has attracted and is still attracting the more considerable attention,[5] not only from scholars, but also from laymen, probably in part because he is so closely and inevitably

[1] See, for example, Froude, *Cæsar, a Sketch* (New York, 1892); Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome,* Vol. II (Eng. transl. by Zimmern, New York and London, 1907); Sihler, *Annals of Cæsar* (New York, 1911); Mess, *Cæsar, sein Leben, seine Zeit, u. seine Politik* (Leipzig, 1913). In this dissertation the first reference to a book, except Latin and Greek texts and well-known reference books, will be in full; subsequent references will be only by name of author or by abbreviation of name of author and of title. A limited bibliography may be made up from such first references.

[2] See Gardthausen, *Augustus u. seine Zeit* (Leipzig, 1891-1904); Firth, *Augustus Cæsar and the Organization of the Empire of Rome* (New York, 1903).

[3] See Quidde, *Caligula, eine Studie über römischen Cäsarenwahnsinn* (Leipzig,?); Linnert, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Caligulas* (Nürnberg, 1909).

[4] See Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero* (London, 1903).

[5] See Tarver, *Tiberius the Tyrant* (Westminster, 1902); Schott, *Studien zur Geschichte des Kaisers Tiberius* (Bamberg, 1904); Lang, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kaisers Tiberius* (Jena, 1911).

associated with the charming and now much frequented island of Capri, where he spent his last years and where his memory still lingers in local oral tradition and in the minds of those who recall their reading in ancient history. But Claudius has not been the subject of any separate detailed study since the publication in 1876 of Lucien Double's *L'Empereur Claude,*[6] which may more fittingly be called by the title of its last chapter, *"Pro Claudio,"* and the appearance in 1877 of the second edition of Lehmann's *Claudius und seine Zeit,*[7] which is concerned with Claudius as a political and historical figure rather than as a man and a personality.

There have been, to be sure, such general works on the Cæsars, in which Claudius is of course included, as for instance Champagny's *Les Césars,*[8] the fifth edition of which appeared, revised and enlarged, in 1876; Ampère's *L'Empire Romain à Rome,* published in 1881;[9] Baring-Gould's *Tragedy of the Cæsars,* 1892, of which the sixth and latest edition appeared in 1907;[10] Van Santvoord's *House of Cæsar and the Imperial Disease,* 1902;[11] Domaszewski's *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiser,* 1909;[12] and Birt's *Römische Charakterköpfe,* 1913.[13] These, however, while interesting and suggestive, represent chiefly attempts to rework and revivify old material and are based evidently upon the more detailed works on the separate emperors that have preceded them.

For a detailed character study of Claudius there would therefore seem to be room at this time, and indeed the present work was first undertaken with the publication of

[6] Double, *L'Empereur Claude* (Paris, 1876).

[7] Lehmann, *Claudius und seine Zeit* (2d edit., Leipzig, 1877).

[8] Champagny, *Les Césars* (5th edit., Paris, 1876).

[9] Ampère, *L'Empire Romain à Rome* (Paris, 1881).

[10] Baring-Gould, *Tragedy of the Cæsars* (6th edit., New York, 1907).

[11] Van Santvoord, *House of Cæsar and the Imperial Disease* (Troy, N. Y., 1902).

[12] Domaszewski, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiser* (Leipzig, 1909).

[13] Birt, *Römische Charakterköpfe, Ein Weltbild in Biographien* (Leipzig, 1913).

the results of such a study in view. However, it was undertaken also with the intention of laying due stress upon Claudius's physical and mental peculiarities, with the object of arriving, if possible, at a proper estimate of their exact nature and extent and of their influence or effect upon Claudius's personality, character and reputation. It is this aspect of the subject to which consideration has therefore been limited in this work, in order to bring it within the compass of a dissertation.

I have chosen to attack the problem particularly at this point because of the unusual prominence given by the ancient authors to Claudius's physical and mental peculiarities, indicating that they must have been striking and making it impossible to ignore them, and also because of the fact that it was these very peculiarities that seem to have made Claudius an insolvable problem, or enigma, to his own family. Indeed, the problem is effectively presented by Augustus[14] himself in a letter written to Livia at the beginning of 12 A. D.,[15] when Claudius was in his twenty-first year:

"I have talked with Tiberius, my dear Livia, as you instructed me, with regard to what is to be done with your grandson Tiberius [*i. e.*, Claudius] at the games of Mars. Now we are both agreed that we must decide once for all what plan we are to adopt in his case. For if he is *parfait, tout à fait parfait,* so to speak, what reason have we for doubting that he ought to be advanced through the same grades and steps through which his brother [*i. e.*, Germanicus] has been advanced? But if, on the other hand, we feel that he is *inférieur et qu'il lui manque quelque chose à l'esprit et au corps,* we must not furnish the means of ridiculing both him and ourselves to a public *qui a l'habitude de se moquer de pareilles choses et de les dédaigner.* Surely we shall always be in difficulties if we deliberate about each separate occasion without having settled beforehand the

[14] Suetonius, *Claudius* 4.

[15] Smilda, *C. Suetonii Tranquilli, Vita Divi Claudii* (Groningen, 1896), p. 21, note on *sequi fratrem suum.*

question in our minds whether or not we think that he is capable of holding public offices.

"However, for the present, as to the matters about which you now ask my advice, I do not object to his having charge of the banquet of the priests at the games of Mars, if he will consent to being advised by his kinsman, Silvanus's son, for fear that he may do something to make himself conspicuous and ridiculous. That he should view the games in the circus from the imperial box does not meet with my approval, for he will be conspicuous if exposed to view in the very forefront of the theatre. I am opposed to his going to the Alban Mount or to his being in Rome on the days of the Latin festival; for why is he not made prefect of the city if he is able to attend his brother to the Mount?

"You have my views, my dear Livia, to wit, that I desire that something be decided once for all about the whole matter, to save us from constantly wavering between hope and fear. Moreover, you may, if you wish, give this part of my letter to our kinswoman Antonia also to read."[16]

That Augustus did entertain hopes of Claudius as well as fears is indicated clearly by two other letters[17] to Livia which were written when Claudius was somewhere between the ages of fourteen or fifteen[18] and twenty-three.[19] They

[16] Here, as elsewhere in this dissertation, the translation of passages from Suetonius is based largely on the translation by J. C. Rolfe, appearing in The Loeb Classical Library (New York, 1914).

[17] Suet. *l. c.*

[18] The designation of Claudius as *adulescens* in the first of these two letters compels us to date the letter not earlier than the latter part of 5 A. D., when Claudius was just fourteen (see Suet. *Claud.* 2 and Smilda, p. 12, note on *Iullo Antonio*), since the period of *adulescentia* did not begin until a boy was fourteen or fifteen (see Varro ap. Censor. 14, 2; Isid. *Orig.* 11, 2, 4). There is nothing in the second of these letters to assist us excepting perhaps that the reference to Claudius's proficiency in declamation may be taken as an indication that he was in all likelihood more than a child at the time.

[19] Augustus's death occurred Aug. 19, 14 A. D. (see Suet. *Aug.* 100), when Claudius was just twenty-three.

give the impression also that the emperor was more enthusiastic about Claudius than the rest of the imperial family, who are known to have despised him,[20] and that he was suggesting, at least implicitly, that the boy was worthy of more consideration and regard than his grandmother had been wont to vouchsafe.

In the first of these two letters he writes: "While you are away, I shall invite the young Tiberius to dinner every day to keep him from dining alone with his friends Sulpicius and Athenodorus. I do wish that he would choose more carefully *et moins aveuglement* someone to imitate in his movements, bearing and gait. The poor fellow *est poursuivi par l'infortune;* for *dans les affaires sérieuses,* when his mind does not stray from the subject, *il montre suffisamment la hauteur de son esprit.*"

In the other letter he writes: "Confound me, my dear Livia, if I am not surprised that your grandson Tiberius could have pleased me with his declamation. For how anyone who speaks so *confusément* in conversation, can speak *clairement* what he has to say when he declaims I do not see."

Very clearly, then, Augustus was wrestling with the problem as to the exact nature and extent of Claudius's physical and mental deficiencies. Were they real defects, incurable, not susceptible of improvement, or were they only evidences of carelessness, of bad habit, which might in time be outgrown? Again, if these defects were destined to persist, were they serious enough to make it impossible, or at least inadvisable from the point of view of the reputation of the imperial family, for him to be permitted to enter upon the political career for which his birth and position fitted him? Finally, was it possible, after all, that Claudius could be actually deficient mentally when he showed in various ways and in matters of real importance that his intellect was undoubtedly above the average?

[20] Suet. *Claud.* 3; 5; 8; 9.

It is this problem of Augustus's, then, largely a problem for the physician and psychiatrist, that I have set myself the task of solving, with the hope and belief that its solution will contribute to a proper understanding and appreciation of Claudius. In seeking to apply the special knowledge of medicine and psychiatry to the study of history and particularly of human character, no claim is laid of course to originality. With the rapid progress in these two sciences and the reshaping of ideas as to the effect of the purely physical and mental on character and conduct, came attempts on the part of physicians and others to read anew the characters of the Roman emperors, as of other great figures of ancient and modern times, from the point of view of the pathologist.

As early as 1838 one finds in the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* short articles[21] in which the cases of Caligula, Claudius and Nero were briefly discussed and the subjects summarily pronounced insane. Champagny in 1841 seems to have been the first to make use of the expression "*manie impériale,*"[22] by which he characterized apparently the tendency on the part of those connected with the Roman imperial house to wholesale political execution and assassination.[23] *Cäsarenwahnsinn,* treated evidently as a veritable trade psychosis, was carefully divided into four stages of development by Freytag in his romance, *Die Verlorene Handschrift,* published in 1873;[24] and Dr. Wiedemeister in 1875 brought out his book of more than three hundred pages on *Der Cäsarenwahnsinn der Julisch-Claudischen*

[21] Lisle, *Quelques applications de la médecine et de la physiologie à l'étude de l'histoire, Gaz. méd. de Paris* (1838), 2. s., VI, 97 ff.

[22] See Wiedemeister, *Der Cäsarenwahnsinn der Julisch-Claudischen Imperatorenfamilie Geschildert an den Kaisern Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero* (Hannover, 1875), Introd. p. VII. The reference is evidently to the first edition of Champagny's *Les Césars;* but I have not been able to verify it.

[23] Cf. Van Santvoord, Preface, p. VII.

[24] See Wiedemeister, Introd. p. IX. I have not been able to verify the original reference.

Imperatorenfamilie, in which he attempted to show that Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero were all victims of various forms of this disease, which he declared to be due to degeneration.[25] Finally, within recent years have appeared numerous small articles along the same line, among them one by Dr. Ernst Müller, published in 1913 and entitled *Die Regenten des Julisch-Claudischen Kaiserhauses in historischer, genealogischer, und psychiatrischer Beleuchtung,*[26] and another by Dr. Friedrich Kanngiesser, written in the same year, on *Die Pathographie der Julisch-Claudischen Dynastie.*[27]

For this particular branch of a character study the classical student cannot of course claim any peculiar aptitude or preparation; but he is presumed at least to be able to read with accuracy and interpret with minute and sympathetic understanding his original sources, and for this primarily important part of his task he may justly claim to be better fitted and more patiently inclined than the average busy modern physician. It is for this reason that the writer has not felt altogether presumptuous in attempting such a subject, especially as he has not worked without the guiding hands of several medical men who have given him the benefit of their advice and criticism. Whatever the validity of the diagnosis contained in the concluding chapter, it is hoped that at least the clinical picture, or clinical history, of Claudius will be found to have been presented with accuracy and fullness; and if this work shall offer only the basis for a more professional study on the part of a physician or psychiatrist, the writer will feel that it has not been undertaken in vain.

[25] Wiedemeister, Introd. pp. IX-XI.

[26] *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie u. Psychisch—Gerichtliche Medizin* (1913), Vol. 70, pp. 575-597.

[27] *Archiv für Psychiatrie u. Nervenkrankheiten,* Vol. 53, pt. 1 (Dec. 1913), pp. 83-100.

THE PROBLEM OF CLAUDIUS

CHAPTER I

Physical Characteristics

PREMATURE BIRTH

Suetonius reports that Claudius's mother Antonia repeatedly spoke of her son as a "monster of a man, not completed by Dame Nature, but only begun."[1] This description has ordinarily been interpreted, and apparently by Suetonius also, as referring in a vague way to Claudius's physical and mental shortcomings;[2] but there seems to be no convincing reason for not taking it more literally, as an implication, at least, that Claudius was born prematurely.

Moreover, in the *Apocolocyntosis* there are at least two slurs upon Claudius's birth,[3] and the full meaning of one of them is brought out more clearly by the theory of premature birth. Mercury is represented as pleading with one of the Parcæ for the death of Claudius. "Why," he complains, "do you allow the poor fellow to be tormented further? . . . . What grudge have you against him and the state? For once let the astrologers tell the truth, who have been taking him off every year, every month even, since he became emperor. And yet it is no wonder if they do go wrong and no one knows his hour, *nemo enim unquam illum natum putavit.*" This last clause has generally been

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 3: "*Mater Antonia portentum eum hominis dicitabat, nec absolutum a natura, sed tantum incohatum.*"

[2] Suet. *l. c.;* Lehmann, *Claudius,* p. 76; Pauly-Wiss. *Real—Encycl.* III, 2783.

[3] Sen. *Apocol.* 3, 2. Cf. 11, 3: "*corpus dis iratis natum.*"

taken as a play upon the proverbial expression *nemo natum putavit,* meaning "to treat as a nonentity,"[4] and has been understood in the sense that "nobody ever believed he was really quite born,"[5] or "nobody ever made any account of his being born."[6] The first interpretation is fairly satisfactory, implying that as he was never really born, he of course had no birth-hour, and therefore the astrologers could not calculate the hour of his death. Moreover, it may well be taken to contain a vague reference to some cloud over Claudius's birth. But the second version, in its rendering of *putavit,* suggests what may be, after all, the real interpretation. It is possible that there is an additional play on *puto* in the sense of "calculate," and that it is as if Mercury should be represented as saying, "Claudius has a way, you know, of upsetting calculations about him. People miscalculated the day of his birth, and so it is no wonder if even the astrologers have not been able to tell the day of his death."

But the theory of premature birth is further supported by a bit of circumstantial evidence. At the time of Claudius's birth his father Drusus was military governor of the "three Gauls" and commander of the legions stationed on the Rhine.[7] Lugdunum was his official headquarters, and there his wife Antonia had taken up her residence together with her two children, Germanicus and Drusilla.[8] There Claudius was born on the first of August, 10 B. C.,[9] on the very day on which, according to Suetonius, an altar was

[4] Ball, *The Satire of Seneca* (New York, 1902), p. 166.

[5] Rouse's translation of the *Apocol.,* The Loeb Classical Library (New York, 1913), p. 375.

[6] Ball's translation, p. 134.

[7] Suet. *Claud.* 1 (cf. notes and parallels given by Smilda). Cf. Mommsen, *Röm. Gesch.* V, 76; Bury, *Student's Roman Empire* (New York, 190-?), p. 84.

[8] Lehmann, pp. 72-73.

[9] Suet. *Claud.* 2 and Smilda's note.

first dedicated in that place to Augustus.[10] This was undoubtedly the occasion for a great celebration and festival in Lugdunum. It is reasonable to suppose that Augustus and Tiberius were present [11] and that Drusus returned from the Rhine to take part in the ceremony. In the circumstances the governor's house was naturally the scene of elaborate entertaining and feasting, and it is not improbable

[10] This was doubtless the *Ara Romae et Augusti.* As to the year of its dedication Suetonius differs from the epitomizer of Livy, who (*Liv. Periocha,* 139) places it in the year 12 B. C. (*cf.* Dio LIV, 32. All references in this dissertation to Dio Cassius will be to the edition of Boissevain, Berlin, 1895-1901). Some have preferred to follow the *Periocha* (cf. Marq. in *Ephem. Epigr.* I, p. 204; Schiller, *Gesch. der Röm. Kaiserzeit,* p. 213; Momm. *Röm. Gesch.* V, 85; Hirschfeld, *C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, p. 227. Cf. also Domaszewski, *Gesch. der Röm. Kaiser,* II, 21, who, in attempting to reconcile the *Periocha* of Livy and Suetonius's statement, casts aside all testimony as to Claudius's age, and makes 12 B. C. the date of his birth). Others (cf. P. Guiraud, *Les Assemblées Provinc.* p. 45; E. Beurlier, *Le Culte Impérial,* p. 19, A. 1; and Smilda, note *l. c.*) attempt to explain the discrepancy by saying that the cult of Rome and Augustus was instituted in 12 and the altar dedicated in 10. Bury (*Student's Roman Empire,* pp. 85, 127, and 232) makes 12 B. C. the date of the dedication of an *altar* and 10 B. C. of a *temple* to Augustus and Rome. Gardthausen (*Augustus,* II, 366, note 19) suggests that while an altar was probably first dedicated in 12 B. C., the marble altar itself was probably not artistically completed until two years later, when, on August 1st, during the visit of Augustus himself (see note below) it was probably formally consecrated. But whatever the proper conclusion as to the discrepancy, it does not affect materially the point which it is pertinent to make here, that August 1st, 10 B. C., was a day of festivity in Lugdunum in which the family of Drusus would necessarily have a large part; for after the dedication of the altar the priest of the three Gauls sacrificed annually on August 1st to Rome and Augustus, and the day was doubtless observed as a day of entertaining and feasting. (See Momm. *Röm. Gesch.* V, 85).

[11] Dio LIV, 36, 3–4, and LV, 1, 1: "*καὶ τούτους* [*τοὺς Δελμάτας*] *μὲν ὁ Τιβέριος ἐκ τῆς Γαλατίας, ἐς ἣν μετὰ τοῦ Αὐγούστου ἐσεληλύθει, καταπεμφθεὶς ἀνεστήσατο . . . . . καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἔς τε τὴν Ῥώμην σὺν τῷ Αὐγούστῳ ἀνεκομίσθησαν* [*ὁ Τιβέριος καὶ ὁ Δροῦσος*], *ἐν γὰρ τῇ Λουγδουνίδι τὰ πολλὰ . . . . . διέτριβε . . . . ταῦτα μὲν ἐπί τε τοῦ Ἰούλλου Ἀντωνίου καὶ ἐπὶ Φαβίου Μαξίμου ὑπάτων ἐγένετο.*"

that preparations for the celebration or an imprudent participation on the part of the governor's wife resulted in her premature *accouchement*.

GENERAL HEALTH

Claudius's general health was probably never robust. Seneca represents Fever (*Febris*), doubtless intended as a personification of sickness in general,[12] as having lived with him many years and as accompanying him finally on his celestial journey.[13] That he was delicate probably from birth, but certainly from early childhood, is indicated by Suetonius, who states that "he was harassed throughout almost all his childhood and early manhood by various obstinate disorders,"[14] and by Dio, who speaks of him as "brought up in illness from childhood."[15] The exact nature of this ill health we are not told, but according to Suetonius[16] it lasted well into Claudius's early manhood, probably until he was twenty-five or thirty years old, and resulted in his being blunted, or made dull, in both mind and body. As a consequence he was not considered fit, even at an advanced age, for the performance of any duty, whether public or private.[17] It is safe to infer that this dullness, whether it mean simply mental and physical sluggishness or actual arrested development, was characteristic of Claudius from early childhood. That is, there is no indication that

[12] Ball in his note on chap. 6 takes it as the well-known Roman fever, which, he says without authority, was "the officially reported cause of Claudius's death."

[13] Sen. *Apocol.* 6, 1.

[14] Suet. *Claud.* 2.

[15] Dio LX, 2, 4.

[16] Suet. *l. c.*

[17] Suet. *l. c.* This does not refer specifically to the holding of magistracies, but probably to any kind of public or private service or employment which would naturally fall to the lot of a prince of the imperial house. Cf., for example, Nero's activities during Claudius's last years (Tac. *Ann.* XII, 41 and 58).

he was normal up to a certain age and that some one particular illness then caused the impairment of his strength.

Perhaps it should be noted here that Claudius is nowhere mentioned as having participated as a boy in the dangerous game of Troy,[18] which was limited to boys under sixteen, and in which Gaius,[19] the adopted son of Augustus, took part at the age of seven, and Nero and Britannicus when nine and six years old, respectively.[20]

It was "on account of this same ill health," says Suetonius,[21] that at a gladiatorial spectacle given in 6 A. D.[22] by Germanicus and Claudius in honor of their father Drusus, Claudius presided muffled up in a cloak-cape, or hood; and that on the day of his assuming the *toga virilis,* probably the same year or not more than a year or two later,[23] he was carried in a litter to the Capitol at dead of night, without the usual ceremonies attending such an occasion. These two incidents, especially the latter, look suspiciously like an attempt on the part of the imperial family, who are known to have been sensitive about him,[24] to avoid as far as possible submitting Claudius to public view. On the other hand, if we are to believe that his health was the sole cause, the first incident suggests solicitude for the protection of his head, probably from the danger of sunstroke or against cold or dampness;[25] the second that, whether from tem-

[18] Cf. Verg. *Aen.* V, 545 ff.; Marq. *Staatsverw.* III, 525. For the danger attending the game, see Suet. *Aug.* 43.

[19] Dio LIV, 26, 1.

[20] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 11, 5 and Furneaux's note; XII, 25, 3 and note.

[21] Suet. *l. c.*

[22] Cf. Dio LV, 27, 3.

[23] A boy usually received the *toga virilis* between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, although at times he received it as early as twelve and as late as nineteen (cf. Marq. *Privatleben,* 131). If Claudius had received the *toga virilis* at an unusual age, Suetonius would probably have mentioned the fact, as in the case of Caligula (Suet. *Cal.* 10), who did not assume it until he was nineteen.

[24] Suet. *Claud.* 4.

[25] Quint. Inst. XI, 3, 144: "*Palliolum . . . . sola excusare potest valetudo.*" Cf. Ovid, *A. A.* I, 733; Sen. *Q. N.* IV, 13, 10.

porary or chronic weakness of some sort, he was unable to walk to the Capitol and undergo the strain of the accustomed ceremonies. It is quite likely that the particular form of Claudius's trouble offered a convenient excuse to his family, who were only too anxious to withdraw him from the public gaze.

From the context we must infer that Suetonius means it to be understood that it was on account of this same ill health of Claudius that "*etiam post tutelam receptam alieni arbitrii fuit.*"[26] *Post tutelam receptam* doubtless is equivalent to *postquam in suam tutelam venit.*[27] This regularly took place upon a boy's attaining the age of puberty, that is, after he had completed his fourteenth year.[28] If at this time Claudius was considered to be suffering from an incurable disease, or to be deficient in certain other ways, there was nothing unusual in his being placed under another form of guardianship, *cura;*[29] and this may be what Suetonius means by "*alieni arbitrii fuit.*" It is possible, however, that Suetonius has no reference to a formal, legal *cura;* that *alieni arbitrii* should be taken rather by hendiadys with *sub paedagogo* (*i. e.*, "he was under the authority of another, a pedagogue"); and that we are intended to understand merely that Claudius, some time after most boys would have been relieved from such restraint and supervision, was under the constant care and authority of a special pedagogue. That eccentricity of behavior was one of the reasons for Claudius's supposed need of an attendant in his youth, is suggested by a passage in the previously quoted[30] letter of Augustus to Livia, written in 12 A. D., when Claudius was in his twenty-first year. Doubtless by this time the regular

[26] Suet. *Claud.* 2.

[27] Cf. Cic. *De Orat.* I, 39, 180; Nepos, *Eum.* 2, 2.

[28] *Inst.* XXII, Pr.

[29] *Inst.* XXIII, *passim,* and esp. 4: "*et mente captis et surdis et mutis et qui morbo perpetuo laborant, quia rebus suis superesse non possunt, curatores dandi sunt.*"

[30] Introd.

attendant had been given up, but Augustus writes that he is willing for Claudius to be superintendent of the feast of the priests at the *Ludi Martiales* only upon the condition that he will allow himself to be advised (*admoneri*) by his kinsman, the son of Silanus, "*ne quid faciat quod conspici et derideri possit.*"

The description of Claudius's pedagogue, quoted as having been made by Claudius himself, is significant for our purposes: "*quem barbarum et olim superiumentarium ex industria sibi appositum, ut se quibuscumque de causis quam saevissime coerceret, ipse quodam libello conqueritur.*"[31] Of course it is possible that this description should be taken no more seriously than Horace's "*plagosus Orbilius,*" or the humorous reminiscence of some modern on the severity of his schoolmaster of early days. On the other hand, it is not at all out of keeping with the feeling of Claudius's family towards him and[32] their undoubted misunderstanding of him[33] that they should have placed him under the authority of just such a man as Claudius describes. It is quite likely that Livia and Antonia and perhaps even Augustus entertained at first the primitive idea that Claudius's peculiarities or faults of behavior, whatever they may have been, could be cured, if that were in any way possible, by the constant application of the rod. They accordingly chose for this inglorious task a man who was not likely to be restrained by delicate sensibilities. That the boy's general health did not improve materially under such heroic treatment hardly need be wondered at.

As we have already seen,[34] Augustus appears to have been uncertain, when Claudius was twenty-one years old, whether he was physically and mentally sound. After he became emperor, writes Suetonius, his general health, which formerly had caused concern, was good excepting that he suffered from some stomach trouble.[35] On the other hand, Dio[36] twice refers to his physical weakness as the cause of

[31] Suet. *Claud.* 2.
[32] Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 3; 4; 5.
[33] See Chapter VII.
[34] Introd.
[35] Suet. *Claud.* 31.
[36] Dio LX, 2, 2 and 12, 3.

his remaining seated while reading any communication to the senate, and Josephus gives bodily feebleness as the reason for his inability to walk to the camp when the praetorians insisted on making him emperor.[37] However, as we shall see,[38] these last two references point undoubtedly to a specific weakness and do not properly belong here.

Toward the end of the year 52 Claudius had an illness, the nature of which we are not told,[39] and it is perhaps reasonable to infer that this was the beginning of a decline in health, the seriousness of which the emperor himself appears to have recognized. Shortly before his death he made a will[40] and spoke publicly of his approaching end,[41] which in all probability would have come soon anyway through natural causes, even if we are to believe the story of his violent death by poison.[42]

APPEARANCE AND PHYSIQUE

The statues, busts, cameos and coins,[43] and the verbal descriptions of Claudius by Suetonius[44] and Joannes Malalas,[45]

[37] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 222.

[38] Section of Chap. I on *Weakness, or Partial Paralysis, of Legs.*

[39] Dio LX, 33, 9. Lehmann (p. 362) identifies this illness with the stomach trouble mentioned in Suet. *Claud.* 31. It would seem better, however, to interpret the latter trouble as one that was chronic, or constantly recurring, rather than limited to one attack. Cf. Smilda, p. 151, note on *stomachi dolore.*

[40] Suet. *Claud.* 44.

[41] Suet. *Claud.* 46.

[42] Suet. *Claud.* 44; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 66-67; Dio LX, 34, 2 ff.; Plin. *N. H.* II, 92; XI, 189; XXII, 92; Sen. *Octav.* 164 (cf. 23, 30, 44 and 102); Joseph. *Antiq.* XX, 148; Martial I, 20, 4; Juv. V, 147; VI, 620; Philostrat. *Vit. Apoll.* (ed. Kayser, I, p. 189); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 13; *Epit.* 4, 10; Auson. *Caes. Mon.* 4, l. 5; Oros. *Ad. Pag.* VII, 6, 18.

[43] See Brunn, Arndt and Bruckmann, *Griechische u. römische Porträts* (Munich, 1891-1913); Bernoulli, *Römische Ikonographie* (Stuttgart, 1881-1886), II, 1, pp. 166-180; 327-355; 368-373; and Taf. XVII, XVIII, XXVIII, XXXI, XXXIV and XXXV. See also Bar.-Gould, pp. 445, 469, 479, 533.

[44] Suet. *Claud.* 30.

[45] Joan. Mal. *Chron.* p. 246, 6 f.

all have reference undoubtedly to his appearance during the period of his principate,[46] that is, when he was between the ages of fifty and sixty-three. From these representations and descriptions may be made up the following composite description:

Claudius was tall, but not lank. His shoulders were narrow and his chest rather flat. Certainly he was not of an athletic build, excepting that his arms appear to have been normal, if not powerful, and his neck overdeveloped muscularly.[47] His legs too are represented in the statues as normal. His head was of normal size and appearance. He had an abundance of beautiful white hair growing rather far forward and also far down the back of his head. His brow was broad and of medium height; it was somewhat furrowed horizontally and had a well-defined vertical crease in the middle. He had blue eyes,[48] which were deep set, and fleshy protruding brows drawn up toward the root of the nose covered the upper lids. His nose was straight and well-shaped, and from the nostrils clearly-marked furrows ran down toward the corners of the mouth, which corners were slightly retracted. The mouth was broad, but well-shaped, with the lips not firmly set, but slightly parted. The chin was small and weak, falling away into the throat without any decided line of demarcation. The ears were large and protruding, the right being more prominent than the left. His face was pale and appears to have been rather thin and pinched.

On the whole, there seems to be no good reason for doubting Suetonius's statement that "Claudius did not lack majesty or dignity of appearance when he was standing or sitting, and especially when he was lying down." It is important to note here, however, that this statement suggests

[46] See Bern. p. 345.

[47] See more particularly Bern. Taf. XXXIV and XXXV.

[48] Joan. Mal. *l. c.* Some (cf. Bern. p. 345; Double, p. 226) have attempted also to read the expression of the eyes from the portraits, but this has not seemed feasible to me.

that even the effort of standing or sitting put a strain upon Claudius sufficient to alter his appearance at least slightly; and when he walked or made any exertion or engaged in doing anything at all, whether under special stress or not, his appearance seems to have been marred by several disagreeable traits. These, however, need not be mentioned here, as they will be taken up in this chapter in their own respective connections.

As to the degree of intelligence, force of will, physical strength or weakness, and other characteristics expressed in Claudius's features there is variation in the individual cases of the portraits themselves and in the opinions of modern commentators. According to Bernoulli,[49] "while heads like the colossal one of the Braccio Nuovo (No. 3) convey the impression of a personality thoroughly worthy and sensible, though not specifically intelligent and vigorous, others bear the stamp of great weakness, or exhaustion, and fretfulness, which it is quite difficult to distinguish from that of mere old age. In some, however, there is presented to us quite unmistakably that stupidity with which he is reproached by the historians or a dullness such as is produced by over-indulgence in wine."

Ampère[50] sees in the representations of Claudius a head "noble, intelligent, and sad." Double[51] characterizes his expression as sweet and serious. Merivale[52] notes an expression of pain and anxiety, of fatigue of both body and mind, a glance of fear and of dependence. "It is the face," he says, "of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him." Mayor,[53]

[49] Bern. p. 346.

[50] Ampère, p. 23.

[51] Double, p. 226.

[52] Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire* (New York, 1865), V, pp. 376-377.

[53] Mayor, *Notes fragmentaires pour servir à une Iconographie des Césars au point de vue Anthropologique* (Rome, 1886); not available to me, but quoted from Bar.-Gould, p. 466. See also Bar.-Gould, p. 150.

in his description of a head in the Chiaramonti Gallery (No. 18), observes that the face is still young, the expression sad and dazed, the mouth tremulous with tears (*bouche pleurarde*). On a statue in the same gallery (No. 117) he remarks that "the aspect is one of suffering and sadness, with shadows of hesitation, fear, and embarrassment. It is the Claudius of history—the man with no other will than that of his immediate surroundings."

Rydberg,[54] in his description more particularly of the statue in the Rotunda of the Vatican (No. 550) representing Claudius as Jupiter, characterizes the representation as that of "a Hamlet grown old. . . . . The sculptor, so to speak, has wrought in marble the Greek word by which Augustus hit the chief trait in Claudius's nature. The word applied to him needs no translation; when we hear *meteoria,* we represent to ourselves a floating in boundless space, amid clouds and vapors, an irresolute life in empty dreams, burdened by regret at the feeble will, and sometimes crossed by lofty purposes. It was young Hamlet's life, and it was that of the old Roman emperor. One reads it with surprising clearness in every line. His is a well-formed head, against which from the point of view of beauty one can hardly note anything, but that the oval of the face is somewhat too compressed. The broad forehead is overcast with clouds of melancholy. The eyes disclose with their unsteady, sad, and kindly look, a plodding and suffering spirit, that is conscious of its noble birth, but unable to maintain its freedom. The mouth is well modeled, and indicates a refinement of feeling one should not have expected here, but which, upon impartial investigation of Claudius's nature, comes to light. The bearing is noble, but constrained; the formation of the body irreproachable, with exception of the narrow shoulders. The whole makes a painful, yet a winning impression. We seem to see unhappiness that has

[54] Rydberg, *Roman Days* (Eng. transl. by Clark, New York, 1879, from the Swedish of Rydberg's *Roman Emperors in Marble*), pp. 62-63.

a right to plead for sympathy, and weakness coupled with too much good for it to awaken only pity and contempt."

My own impression, corroborated by the impressions of several persons knowing little or nothing of Claudius to whom I have shown the portraits, is briefly as follows: The face, while not noble, is certainly not foolish, or stupid, or dull, but, rather, intelligent and alert. It bears the marks of physical weakness and suffering and of lack of moral force, assurance and determination. There is very definite evidence of eye-strain and also of general physical and nervous strain. There is every indication of sensitiveness, of timidity, or apprehensiveness, and also of kindliness and mildness, or certainly harmlessness. Mayor's "*air pleurard*" is excellent as a general characterization.

WEAKNESS, OR PARTIAL PARALYSIS, OF LEGS

In enumerating the characteristics detracting from the majesty and dignity of Claudius's appearance, Suetonius states that his "weak knees gave way under him when he walked."[55] This gait he characterizes in another place as "*foeda vacillatio*,"[56] "a disgusting unsteady gait," in which instance, however, the unsteadiness of the emperor's legs was doubtless heightened by the fact that he was attempting to run.

Seneca is more cruelly definite. He represents Claudius after his death as making his way along the celestial road "*non passibus aequis*,"[57] "dot and carry one," as Rouse has translated it; and it is stated that upon his arrival at the gate of heaven word was brought to Jupiter that a man who dragged his right foot was seeking admission, the sight of whose generally extraordinary gait, together with certain other peculiarities, was sufficient to dismay, if not

[55] Suet. *Claud.* 30.
[56] Suet. *Claud.* 21.
[57] Sen. *Apocol.* 1, 2.

frighten, even the experienced and hitherto undaunted Hercules.[58] Furthermore, the dirge sung at his funeral is satirically represented as extolling the swiftness of foot which had enabled Claudius to be victorious in the "quick-sped race."[59]

That Claudius's gait was the result of some definite trouble interfering seriously with his physical activity, and not merely the evidence of carelessness and slouchiness,[60] is corroborated by several additional passages in our ancient authorities. Suetonius[61] relates that on the day of his assumption of the *toga virilis,* probably at the age of about fifteen,[62] Claudius was carried in a litter to the Capitol. Josephus[63] represents him as unable, for fear and joy, to walk to the camp of the praetorians after the soldiers had told him that he was to succeed the murdered Caligula. Dio states that when the emperor himself read his speeches in the senate he generally did so sitting down,[64] and that when in celebrating his triumph after the British expedition he ascended the steps of the Capitol on his knees, he was supported on either side by his sons-in-law.[65]

That Claudius possessed this peculiarity of gait in childhood or certainly in his young manhood, is indicated by the fact that Augustus complained of this defect in one of his letters to Livia which Suetonius has preserved.[66]

[58] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 2-3.

[59] Sen. *Apocol.* 12, 2.

[60] The reference to Claudius's gait in the second of the letters of Augustus to Livia quoted by Suetonius (*Claud.* 4) might well be taken as indicating nothing more definite than a slouchy, undignified gait.

[61] Suet. *Claud.* 2.

[62] See note 23.

[63] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 220.

[64] Dio LX, 2, 2.

[65] Dio LX, 23, 1.

[66] See Introd., esp. notes 18 and 19.

TREMOR OF HANDS

Dio[67] speaks of a slight trembling of the hands as a result of Claudius's ill health. Suetonius and Juvenal do not mention this peculiarity; but it is referred to by Seneca, who speaks of the limp hand of Claudius, which was firm enough, however, to wave people away to execution,[68] and satirically represents a great chorus at his funeral praising in their dirge that steady hand with which he bent the bow.[69]

There is no definite testimony that this characteristic was limited to Claudius's later years, and Dio's representing it as a result of his early ill health suggests rather that the trouble came on in childhood or certainly young manhood.

TREMOR OF HEAD

Apparently one of the most striking physical peculiarities of Claudius was his trembling head. Suetonius[70] states that his head was tremulous at all times, but especially when he made any exertion, however trifling, and Dio[71] speaks of a slight trembling of the head as a result of his ill health.

Such an affliction could not escape the satirists. Seneca pictures Claudius upon his arrival in heaven being announced to Jupiter as a man who seemed to be threatening something or other; "*assidue enim caput movere,*"[72] and Hercules, who was sent to interview the stranger, is represented as asking him, "*Quae patria, quae gens mobile eduxit caput?*"[73] Juvenal also refers to the "*tremulum caput*" apparently as quite characteristic of Claudius.[74]

As in the case of the tremor of the hands, Dio's statement suggests that this trouble came on in childhood or early manhood and was not limited to Claudius's later years.

[67] Dio LX, 2, 1.
[68] Sen. *Apocol.* 6, 2.
[69] Sen. *Apocol.* 12, 2, ll. 17-18.
[70] Suet. *Claud.* 30.
[71] Dio LX, 2, 1.
[72] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 2.
[73] Sen. *Apocol.* 7, 2, l. 5.
[74] Juv. VI, 622.

THROAT

Suetonius [75] tells us that Claudius had a full throat, and this characteristic is indeed prominent in practically all the portraits.[76] It may be said to be particularly noticeable or more definitely marked on the coins, where the sterno-mastoid muscle appears over-developed.[77] A full throat, or powerful neck, on a person of otherwise powerful physique is of course not at all unusual, but in the case of Claudius it seems incongruous, though it was certainly not disfiguring and Suetonius listed this particular characteristic among those which added to, rather than detracted from, Claudius's appearance.[78]

The peculiarity has been attributed to swollen glands, indicative of scrofula;[79] but in the absence of any supporting testimony, and in view of the fact that the enlargement seems to be muscular rather than due to swelling, it is perhaps best to accept the explanation suggested by Beulé,[80] of an over-development of the muscles of the neck due to the constant tremor or twitching of the head.

SLOBBERING

Suetonius [81] states that Claudius's anger was rendered still more disgusting by his foaming at the mouth and trickling at the nose. That these evidences of the supersecretion of saliva or of lack of muscular control of its flow were characteristic of Claudius under all conditions, cannot be gathered with any certainty from this passage. However, that such was the case seems likely from the passage in Juvenal [82]

[75] Suet. *Claud.* 30.
[76] See references in note 43.
[77] Cf. Bernoulli, Taf. XXXIV and XXXV.
[78] Suet. *Claud.* 30: *"auctoritas dignitasque formae non defuit . . . . ; (nam et prolixo nec exili corpore erat, et specie canitieque pulchra, opimis cervicibus)."*
[79] Bar.-Gould, p. 467.
[80] Beulé, *Le Sang de Germanicus* (Paris, 1869), p. 198.
[81] Suet. *Claud.* 30.
[82] Juv. VI, 620-623.

in which the satirist refers to the lips dripping with saliva as a distinctive peculiarity of the old emperor. There is no definite testimony that this characteristic was limited to Claudius's later years.

SPEECH

In speaking of Claudius's disagreeable traits Suetonius mentions the fact that he had an impediment in his speech.[83] Dio says that he stumbled, or was tripped up, in his speech and implies that this was a result of his ill health.[84]

Seneca of course seizes the opportunity to make much of the defect, characterizing Claudius's speech as nervous,[85] confused,[86] entangled,[87] and unintelligible.[88] He implies that Claudius spoke a language all his own,[89] and represents Augustus in the council of the gods as declaring himself willing to become Claudius's slave if the latter will pronounce as many as three words in quick succession.[90] In actual life Augustus had written to Livia of his astonishment at the fact that Claudius, who in conversation spoke so indistinctly, could speak distinctly when he declaimed.[91] Perhaps it is to be inferred from another passage in Suetonius, in which he states that Claudius after he was emperor gave frequent readings of his own works through a professional reader,[92] that the emperor was disinclined to read himself because of his speech impediment. Dio seems

[83] Suet. *Claud.* 30: "*linguae titubantia.*"

[84] Dio LX, 2, 1 and 2: "*τὸ δὲ δὴ σῶμα νοσώδης, ὥστε . . . . καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῷ φωνήματι ἐσφάλλετο.*"

[85] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 2: "*perturbato sono.*"

[86] *Ibid.*: "*voce confusa.*"

[87] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 3: "*vocem implicatam.*"

[88] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 2: "*nuntiatur Iovi . . . . non intellegere se linguam eius*"; 6, 2: "*quid diceret nemo intellegebat*"; 7, 2: "*quid nunc profatu vocis incerto sonas?*" 7, 4: "*itaque quantum intellegi potuit, haec visus est dicere.*"

[89] Sen. *Apocol.* 14, 2: "*Claudiana lingua.*" Cf. 5, 2 and 3; also 4, 3.

[90] Sen. *Apocol.* 11, 3.

[91] Suet. *Claud.* 4.

[92] Suet. *Claud.* 41.

to imply this very reason in stating that Claudius had many of his communications to the senate read by a quaestor.[93] However, it is quite possible that other causes entered in, notably his evident inability to stand very long at a time, as we have already seen.

Seneca apparently refers also to the sound, or tone, of Claudius's voice. He describes it as unlike the voice of any terrestrial animal, but more like that of monsters of the deep, hoarse and inarticulate,[94] and he implies in "*quanto potest murmure irascitur,*"[95] that it was not a strong voice, at least when Claudius was angry. There is little reason for doubting Seneca's testimony to the extent, at least, that Claudius's voice was peculiar and unpleasant. As is suggested in the section on *Hearing,* this is by no means an unusual result of deafness.

Granted, then, the probability that the voice itself was peculiar and unpleasant in quality, what was the exact nature of the impediment in speech referred to above? The "*linguae titubantia*" of Suetonius and the "*τῷ φωνήματι ἐσφάλλετο*" of Dio may be taken as meaning either a slow, halting, slovenly utterance, or else stuttering; and with one exception all the other pertinent passages may be used almost equally well to support either of these interpretations. The one exception is the passage from the letter of Augustus to Livia just quoted, and while it must be admitted that it does not necessarily eliminate the other possibility, it serves certainly to increase the probability that Claudius's defect was ordinary stuttering. He spoke indistinctly in conversation; in the delivery of a declamation, which he of course had carefully prepared[96] and committed

[93] Dio LX, 2, 2.

[94] Sen. *Apocol.* 5, 3: "*vocem nullius terrestris animalis sed qualis esse marinis beluis solet, raucam et implicatam.*" Cf. 5, 2: "*perturbato sono.*"

[95] Sen. *Apocol.* 6, 2.

[96] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 3, 6: "*nec in Claudio, quotiens meditata dissereret, elegantiam requireres.*" Although Tacitus here is doubtless referring more particularly to the literary style of Claudius, it is not

to memory, he spoke distinctly. This is a phenomenon causing astonishment today, but it is recognized nevertheless as of frequent, if not invariable, occurrence in the case of stutterers.[97]

It is probably quite safe, then, to infer that Claudius's voice was rough, harsh, disagreeable, and perhaps not very strong, and that in addition he stuttered badly in ordinary conversation and at times perhaps in reading. The passage in Augustus's letter shows that this defect was present in his youth,[98] and it probably began in early childhood.[99] The passages referring to it elsewhere show that he retained it in his later years and that it was undoubtedly one of his most conspicuous characteristics.

HEARING

There are several unmistakable references to Claudius's difficulty in hearing. Early in his reign, probably within the first two or three months,[100] he apologized from the tribunal for making the tribunes stand when they addressed him, saying that on account of the crowd he could not hear them unless they did so. Perhaps we should note here also that when Claudius fell asleep on the bench while judging cases he was with difficulty aroused by the lawyers, although they purposely raised their voices.[101] Suetonius undoubtedly in-

unlikely that he had in mind also his speech impediment. In like manner, I am inclined to believe that in the passage from Suetonius now under discussion Augustus was referring not only to Claudius's speech impediment, but also to the alternating clearness and lack of clearness of his style and manner of expressing himself.

[97] Cf., for instance, Bluemel, *Stammering and Cognate Defects of Speech* (New York, 1913), pp. 285 and 318; Hughes, *Medical World* (Philadelphia), quoted in *Lit. Dig.* of Jan. 30, 1915, pp. 189-190.

[98] See Introd., esp. notes 18 and 19.

[99] Bluemel (p 305) states that 87 per cent of stammerers possess the defect before they are old enough to enter school.

[100] This may be inferred from the fact that Suetonius (*Claud.* 12) mentions this incident as one of the reasons "*quare in brevi spatio tantum amoris favorisque collegit.*"

[101] Suet. *Claud.* 33.

tends this to indicate the soundness of his sleep, but it is not impossible that the impairment of his hearing was at least a partial cause. In the latter part of his reign, probably between 49 and 53 A. D.,[102] occurred the incident in which Narcissus made sport of Claudius in public because of his deafness. One day, while the emperor was holding court, some Bithynians appeared before him and complained loudly of their governor Junius Cilo. When Claudius, not understanding because of the noise, asked the bystanders what it was that they said, Narcissus is reported to have told him that they were expressing their gratitude to Junius; whereupon the emperor decided that Junius should be their governor two years more. The authenticity of this story in its every detail may be called into question, but even if it is only a story it would hardly have been told unless it had the basis of fact necessary to make it a good story, namely, that Claudius was oftentimes unable to hear clearly.

The satirists also refer to this affliction. In the passage in the *Apocolocyntosis* where Claudius is represented as being dragged by Mercury from heaven toward the lower regions and as having fallen in with his own funeral procession, Seneca writes, in describing the procession, that "there was such a great crowd of trumpeters, hornblowers, and players upon every kind of brass instrument, such a great din that even Claudius could hear it."[103] Juvenal too

[102] Dio LX, 33, 6. The position of the passage indicates that the incident took place in the year 52-53. Lehmann (p. 351), on the basis of Tac. *Ann.* XII, 21, thinks that it took place probably in 49 A. D.

[103] Sen. *Apocol.* 12, 1. Of course it is quite possible to take the passage as meaning that the noise was so loud that Claudius, although he was dead, could hear it. However, this certainly has less point, and besides we may call attention to the fact that Seneca in the same passage takes it as a matter of course that Claudius, though dead, could *see* his own funeral procession (12, 3) and could also hear the dirge that was being chanted (13, 1). It is possible also to take the passage as a thrust at Claudius's sleepiness, which apparently is the interpretation of both Mayor and Friedländer, according to the notes on Juv. III, 238. It is again possible that it may be a reference to

declares that the noises in the streets of Rome during the night "*eripient somnum Druso vitulisque marinis.*"[104] However, it would not be well to rely on the latter passage in this connection. Even if *Druso* is the correct reading, which is disputed,[105] and refers to Claudius, which is also disputed,[106] the mention of Claudius in connection with *vituli marini*[107] would lead one to think that Juvenal more likely was referring to Claudius's propensities for sound sleep[108] rather than to deafness. On the other hand, it is of course not impossible that he had both in mind.

There is no testimony indicating the extent to which Claudius suffered from deafness, when it came upon him, or what were the causes. It is certain, however, that he was

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Claudius's absent-mindedness or general stupidity and sluggishness, which Seneca satirizes below in 12, 3. Of the four interpretations I have given preference to the most literal.

[104] Juv. III, 236-238.

[105] Speyer, in *Rhein. Mus.* 47 (1892), p. 638, suggests *surdo*.

[106] Both Duff and Wilson think it strange that the name Drusus should be used to designate Claudius and call attention to the inappropriateness of the future *eripient*. Duff suggests that if we are to keep the reading *Druso* it would be better to follow the Scholiast in supposing that it refers to a contemporary of Juvenal unknown to us. Wilson points out that Juvenal three times calls him by his distinctive name, Claudius (V, 147; VI, 115; XIV, 330), and probably had no thought of him in this passage. Though the reference to Claudius is indirect and vague, such use of unusual designations for persons is not uncommon in the poets. Juvenal himself (VIII, 40) uses *Drusorum* to refer to the whole line of Claudii Drusi, and Martial (VIII, 52, 3) uses the same word to refer to Nero and others of his family, perhaps Claudius (see Friedländer's note on Juv. III, 238). Besides, the genitive, dative, and ablative of *Claudius* are extremely inconvenient in hexameter. As for the future *eripient*, the difficulty there is obviated by interpreting the *Druso* of course as typical and translating it "a Drusus (or Claudius)." Speyer (*l. c.*) suggests the emendation *eripiant*.

[107] Cf. *Odyss.* IV, 448 f.: "*αἱ μὲν* [*φῶκαι*] *ἔπειτα* | *ἐξῆς εὐνάζοντο παρὰ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης*"; Plin. *N. H.* IX, 42: "*nullum animal graviore somno premitur.*"

[108] Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 8 and 33, in which latter passage, however, it is stated that Claudius did not sleep long at a time.

not totally deaf. As to whether the trouble was confined merely to his latter years, it may be said that deafness is not infrequently the immediate result of certain childhood illnesses,[109] and that such early deafness would help in accounting for his hoarse, unearthly voice, and for much of his reputation for stupidity.[110] It is also not unreasonable to infer that his deafness after all may have been chiefly a nervous affection, noticeable only when he was excited or confused. In fact, the stories from Suetonius and Dio point rather to this theory.

EYESIGHT

Pliny the Elder, in noting the peculiar characteristics of the eyes of the first five Roman emperors, describes Claudius's eyes as at times bloodshot and having white matter in the corners.[111] This is an indication probably of a chronic conjunctivitis or inflammation of the tear sac. Neither in itself would be apt to affect vision save when the secretion covered the cornea, but defective vision would of course not be incompatible.[112] Certainly the portraits of Claudius, with the frown or drawn appearance of the brow, indicate a permanent eyestrain or sensitiveness;[113] and this would not be an unnatural outcome in the case of one who studied hard and wrote hard from early youth,[114] a great part of the

[109] See Osler, *Principles and Practice of Medicine* (6th edit., New York and London, 1905), p. 136; Dresslar, *School Hygiene* (New York, 1913), p. 247.

[110] Cf. Dresslar, pp. 247-248.

[111] Plin. *N. H.* XI, 144: [*Oculi*] *"Claudio Cæsari ab angulis candore carnoso sanguineis venis subinde suffusi."*

[112] This possible diagnosis is the opinion of an oculist to whom I submitted the case of Claudius. Cf. Kanngiesser, p. 98, n. 5 (see Introd. n. 27).

[113] Cf. Bar.-Gould, p. 540.

[114] See Suet. *Claud.* 3.

time by lamplight.[115] It is quite possible also that the conjunctivitis, if that is the correct diagnosis of the trouble described by Pliny, was caused, or at least aggravated, by habits of over-eating and intemperance.

DIGESTIVE TROUBLE

According to Suetonius,[116] the improvement in Claudius's general health after he became emperor was marred by some stomach trouble, which was severe enough to cause him to meditate suicide. He probably suffered from recurring attacks,[117]—certainly Suetonius's way of putting it does not indicate that it was limited to one single illness,—and the effect upon him would at least suggest that the trouble was of the nature of nervous dyspepsia.[118] That he was inclined to flatulency is implied by Seneca [119] and Suetonius.[120]

There is nothing definite to show that Claudius's digestive trouble was limited to the latter years of his life. It is probable that his digestion had never been very strong, and certainly his habits of gluttony and intemperance referred to below were not conducive to its improvement or safeguarding. On the other hand, it is of course not uncommon for serious digestive trouble or nervous dyspepsia to attack

[115] See Suet. *Claud.* 33: "Claudius was generally awake before midnight." It may reasonably be inferred that he made use of the rest of the night for study or work of some kind, as did, for instance, the elder Pliny (see Plin. *Ep.* III, 5, 8-9) and the emperor Vespasian (see Suet. *Vesp.* 21).

[116] Suet. *Claud.* 31.

[117] Cf. note 39.

[118] See Osler, p. 495.

[119] Sen. *Apocol.* 4, 3: "*Ultima vox eius haec inter homines audita est, cum maiorem sonitum emisisset illa parte, qua facilius loquebatur: 'vae me, puto, concacavi me.'*"

[120] Suet. *Claud.* 32. The main point of satire here is of course Claudius's fondness for publishing edicts on a great variety of subjects, but the Seneca passage suggests another point, namely, that Claudius meditated this particular edict out of sympathy for a fellow-sufferer.

a man past fifty, even if he has had the best of health hitherto, and in the absence of testimony to the contrary it is perhaps better to take it that this was the case with Claudius.

GLUTTONY AND INTEMPERANCE

According to Suetonius, Claudius was the very type of the glutton and the winebibber. He was fond of giving banquets, and "was eager for food and drink at all times and in all places. Once when he was holding court in the forum of Augustus and had caught the savor of a meal which was being prepared for the Salii in the temple of Mars nearby, he left the tribunal, went up where the priests were, and took his place at their table. He hardly ever left the dining-room without being stuffed and soaked." [121]

Claudius seems to have gained his reputation for intemperance during the period of inactivity, or semi-exile, under Tiberius.[122] It is said that after he was emperor he referred in a speech in the senate to the number of taverns in Rome which he had formerly frequented.[123] Aurelius Victor [124] echoes the general charge of gluttony and fondness for drink, and Tacitus [125] and Dio [126] in several places mention his habit of intemperance.

There seems to be no good reason for doubting these charges in the main, though it is probable of course that Suetonius has overdrawn them. Claudius did too much hard work and lived too long to have been the habitual drunkard and glutton that Suetonius represents him to have been; but it is certainly not out of keeping with the custom of his age [127] and with the idleness enforced upon him during

[121] Suet. *Claud.* 32 and 33.
[122] Suet. *Claud.* 5.
[123] Suet. *Claud.* 40.
[124] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 1; *Epit.* 4, 3.
[125] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 37, 2; 38, 2; XII, 64, 4; 67, 1.
[126] Dio LX, 2, 5-6; 34, 2.
[127] Cf. Suet. *Tib.* 42; *Vit.* 7; 10; 13.

Tiberius's reign, not to mention his character and temperament,[128] that he should have acquired habits of excess in both eating and drinking.

SLEEP

Claudius's sleep at night seems to have been very short, probably of not more than three or four hours' duration, at the most; for, according to Suetonius,[129] he generally awoke before midnight. Whether this was from choice, as in the case of Vespasian,[130] or from habitual insomnia, is not known; but it is not out of keeping with his temperament[131] that he should have been a poor sleeper. Like Augustus,[132] who often suffered from want of sleep, he seems regularly to have taken a nap after eating and to have dropped off to sleep at intervals during the day, even at most inopportune times.[133]

[128] See Chaps. VI and VII.
[129] Suet. *Claud.* 33.
[130] Suet. *Vesp.* 21.
[131] See Chap. VII.
[132] Suet. *Aug.* 78.
[133] Suet. *Claud.* 8 and 33.

CHAPTER II

Sexual Instinct and Relations

Claudius was perhaps immoderate and insatiable sexually.[1] While he was emperor he appears to have had concubines,[2] and after the death of Messalina he is represented as impatient, or intolerant, of a life of celibacy.[3] It may be noted, however, that whatever the explanation, he seems to have refrained from affairs with married women.[4]

One of the most insistent and perhaps most just of the reproaches heaped upon Claudius is that of his having been completely under the sway of his wives.[5] This charge, however, should more properly be limited to his later years; for he appears to have been sufficiently his own master to divorce his first wife, Plautia Urgulanilla, on a charge of adultery and under the suspicion of homicide, and the second, Aelia Paetina, for some slight offenses.[6] It is clear

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 33: "*Libidinis in feminas profusissimae.*" Dio LX, 2, 6: "*πάνυ γὰρ ἁπλήστως ἀμφοτέροις σφίσι* [i. e. *τοῖς πότοις καὶ ταῖς μίξεσι*] *προσέκειτο.*"

[2] Dio LX, 18, 3. Cf. LX, 2, 5: "*ἐν συνουσίαις γυναικῶν πλειόσι γενόμενος*"; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 29, 3: "*duas paelices, quarum is* [*Claudius*] *corpori maxime insueverat.*" Cf. Dio LX, 31, 4: "*διὰ τῶν παλλακῶν αὐτοῦ*"; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 11: "*animi ac pellicum gratia marito* [*Claudio*] *Ostiam profecto.*"

[3] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 1, 1. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 6, 3: Vitellius in a speech before the senate advocating Claudius's marriage to Agrippina refers to him as "*principi sua tantum matrimonia experto.*"

[5] Suet. *Claud.* 29 and *Vit.* 2: "*uxoribus addictus.*" Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 25; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 28, 2; XII, 1, 1 and 7, 5; Dio LX, 2, 4; 28, 2, and 31, 7; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 5; *Epit.* 4, 3; Aus. *Caes. Tetr.* V, 3-4.

[6] Suet. *Claud.* 26. The exact dates of the divorces of these two women are not known; but the first must have taken place between 12 and 28, and the second between 29 and 39 A. D. See Smilda, p. 129, notes on *Plautiam Urgulanillam, Aeliam Paetinam,* and *Valeriam Messalinam.*

that this subjection to his wives was evidence of more than the mere lack of force and will power that made him subservient likewise to his freedmen. According to Dio,[7] "*[αἱ γυναῖκες] . . ἐπετίθεντο αὐτῷ . . . . ἐν ταῖς μίξεσι . . . . καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ εὐαλωτότατος.*"

Claudius appears to have been easily influenced by any woman who cared to use her charms. This was known to no one better than to Messalina, and it was probably this knowledge, in addition to her feelings of ordinary jealousy and pique, that led her to such stringent measures against his niece, Julia, who was too often alone with him to please the suspicious empress.[8] It is hinted that similar suspicion and jealousy on the part of Messalina caused the death also of another Julia, the daughter of Drusus, son of Tiberius;[9] and Agrippina, who seems to have gained considerable influence over Claudius,[10] was saved from a like fate only by Messalina's preoccupation with Silius and her consequent execution.[11]

Messalina appears to have had a peculiar and remarkable personal fascination for Claudius, and it was doubtless through her exercise of this influence that she succeeded in having her own way so completely. On this power too she seems to have relied when at the time of her marriage with Silius it was announced that Claudius was on his way to Rome to take vengeance. According to Tacitus, "she quickly resolved to go to meet her husband and have him

[7] Dio LX, 2, 5-6.

[8] Dio LX, 8, 5. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 29; Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 4.

[9] Dio LX, 18, 4. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 32, 5, and 43, 3; where the accusers of Suillius lay the punishment of Julia at his door. But cf. 43, 5, where Suillius asserts he was suborned by Messalina. Cf. also Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 4.

[10] Suet. *Nero* 6: "*gratia quidem et potentia revocatae restitutaeque matris [Agrippinae] usque eo floruit, ut emanaret in vulgus missos a Messalina uxore Claudi, qui cum [Neronem] meridiantem, quasi Britannico aemulum, strangularent.*"

[11] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 12, 1.

look at her, an expedient that had often been of assistance before." [12]

It was this very thing too which the freedmen who opposed her feared most, despite their own great influence over the emperor. In plotting the empress's downfall they seem to have felt that their "one danger was that Claudius might listen to her defence; their one hope that his ears should be closed even to her confession." [13] When she met Claudius on the road as he was returning from Ostia, Narcissus, who was riding with him, handed the emperor a list of her lovers in order to keep him from looking at her.[14] Finally, so great was the fear that Claudius might relent if he should allow Messalina to plead her cause, despite the fright that she had given him and her evident guilt, that Narcissus ordered her execution on his own authority.[15]

Even if Claudius had been inclined, which he was not,[16] to hold steadfastly to his hasty resolution never to marry again,[17] it would have been extremely difficult of accomplishment. His known weaknesses and susceptibility laid him open to the intrigues of designing women,[18] and his niece Agrippina made the most of her opportunities. It is well attested that it was chiefly through the spell of infatuation which she artfully cast upon him that Claudius was impelled to marry her, and this too in the face of a very definite public sentiment against the marriage of uncle and niece.[19]

[12] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 32, 4: *"Messalina tamen, quamquam res adversae consilium eximerent, ire obviam et aspici a marito, quod saepe subsidium habuerat, haud segniter intendit."*

[13] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 28, 3.

[14] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 34, 3: *"simul codicillos libidinum indices tradidit, quis visus Cæsaris averteret."*

[15] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 37, 1-3.

[16] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 1, 1.

[17] Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[18] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 1.

[19] Suet. *Claud.* 26: *"talium coniugiorum, quae ad id tempus incesta habebantur."* Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 25, 8: *"ut deinde [Claudius] ardesceret in nuptias incestas"*; XII, 6, 5: *"nova nobis in fratrum filias coniugia."*

According to Suetonius, Claudius was "lured into love by the enticements of Agrippina . . . . , made possible by the right of exchanging kisses and the opportunities for endearments"[20] offered by their relationship; and this is corroborated by Tacitus,[21] Seneca,[22] and Dio.[23] Claudius as formerly appears to have been helpless before such a line of attack, and rules of convention and personal scruples were cast aside in his desire to marry his niece. She had gained over him such an influence[24] as Messalina had possessed, though she doubtless used it more cleverly and tactfully,[25] and this influence she maintained practically[26] to the end. She appears also to have guarded him quite as carefully as did Messalina from the danger of being fascinated by any other woman of birth and position, bringing about the death of Lollia Paulina, who had been her chief rival for the hand of Claudius,[27] and the banishment of Calpurnia, whose beauty Claudius had chanced casually to praise.[28]

It is perhaps in place in this connection to note the fact that Claudius was unattractive, if not positively repulsive, to women. The aversion of his grandmother, mother, and sister is attested by Suetonius,[29] and there is no evidence of any woman's ever having shown sincere affection for him. Though it is quite possible to explain this in a general way

[20] Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[21] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 3, 1.

[22] Sen. *Octav.* 146-147: "*genitamque fratris coniugem captus sibi toris nefandis flebili iunxit face.*"

[23] Dio LX, 31, 6.

[24] Dio LX, 32, 1, and 33, 1; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 7, 5. Cf. Dio LX, 32-33; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 25-26; 37, 5; 41-42; 56, 4, *etc.*

[25] Dio LX, 32. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XII, 7, 5.

[26] Toward the end of his life Claudius showed unmistakable signs of a change in attitude toward Agrippina, and it is represented that her fear of meeting the fate of Messalina led her to poison the emperor. See Suet. *Claud.* 43-44; Dio LX, 34, 1-2; Tac, *Ann.* XII, 64, 4; Joseph. *Antiq.* XX, 151.

[27] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 22, 1; Dio LX, 32, 4. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XII, 1, 3; 2, 2.

[28] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 22, 3 and XIV, 12, 5.

[29] Suet. *Claud.* 3.

on the ground of his unattractive appearance and manners, it is probable that he was sexually repulsive and that this was due in great part to his appearing excitable and ill at ease in the presence of women.

Claudius may be characterized more aptly as hypernormal rather than abnormal in his sexual instinct and relations. It is possible that he was sexually precocious and suffered from sexual hyperesthesia and from a morbid permanence of the sexual instinct.[30] This would account for the evident aversion of women to him. On the other hand, it is specifically stated by Suetonius that he was entirely free from a certain perversion all too common in his time,[31] and he is nowhere mentioned as having indulged in such excesses as are attributed to Tiberius,[32] Caligula,[33] Nero,[34] and even Julius Cæsar[35] and Augustus.[36]

[30] See Grasset, *The Semi-Insane and the Semi-Responsible* (Eng. translat. by Jelliffe, New York, 1907), p. 147.
[31] Suet. *Claud.* 33: "*marum omnino expers.*"
[32] Suet. *Tib.* 42-45.
[33] Suet. *Calig.* 24-25; 36.
[34] Suet. *Nero* 26-29; Tac. *Ann.* XV, 37.
[35] Suet. *Jul.* 50-52.
[36] Suet. *Aug.* 69-71.

CHAPTER III

Timidity, or Cowardice

The most prominent characteristic of Claudius, according to Suetonius, was that of timidity and suspicion,[1] and certainly his timidity, or cowardice, is not minimized by our other authorities. Dio in enumerating his weaknesses states that "he was afflicted with cowardice, which frequently threw him into such a panic that he made no decision befitting the situation."[2] Aurelius Victor characterizes him as "*pavidus animi*,"[3] "*pavidus*,"[4] and "*natura performidolosus*."[5] There are no other general characterizations, but all give testimony to incidents quite striking enough to bear out the generalization of Suetonius.

While there is no direct testimony in this connection as to the years of Claudius preceding his principate, it is more than likely that he was timid from early boyhood, brought up, as he was, in illness and in the midst of terror.[6] There is no evidence that he ever took part in anything demanding physical courage, such, for instance, as the dangerous game

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 35: "*Sed nihil aeque quam timidus ac diffidens fuit.*" Whatever suspicions Claudius may have entertained in regard to those outside his household, they were offset by a blind trust in those of his own household, his wives and freedmen. Tacitus (*Ann.* XI, 26, 4) represents Silius, when urging Messalina to plot against her husband, as reassuring her with the statement that Claudius was not on the lookout for plots and was slow to suspect (*insidiis incautum*). See Suet. *Claud.* 29: "*insciens plerumque et ignarus*"; Dio LX, 32; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 3, 1; XII, 25; XII, 41, 5-8; XII, 42, 1-2; perhaps XII, 53, 4. Cf. Sen. *Apocol.* 13, 1.

[2] Dio LX, 2, 6.

[3] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 1.

[4] Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 4, 7.

[5] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 9.

[6] Dio LX, 2, 4.

of Troy;[7] and it is hardly possible that a man of any real courage and spirit would have been willing to undergo the treatment which he received at the hands of Tiberius[8] and Caligula,[9] even though it was most politic to do so.

The very beginning of Claudius's reign is associated with an act of cowardice on his part. Terrified by the news of the assassination of Caligula and by the consequent turmoil and confusion, he took refuge behind some curtains in a secluded corner of the palace. From here he was ignominiously dragged out by one of the soldiers who had detected him, and falling on his knees begged for mercy. Even when reassured and told that he was to be made emperor, he appears to have been in such a state of fright as to be unable to walk, and accordingly had to be carried off to the camp in a litter.[10]

With the memory of Caligula's fate indelibly impressed upon his mind, Claudius appears never to have been free from fear of assassination. According to Suetonius,[11] no suspicion was too trivial, no inspirer of it too insignificant to drive him to precaution and vengeance. His attitude is indicated by his continually giving to the soldiers as a watchword the Homeric verse, "Ward off the man who first assails you."[12] Having heard that rival candidates for the principate, presumably superior to himself, were proposed by the senate, he did not dare trust himself to a meeting of that body until a month after his accession.[13] At this time,

[7] See Chap. I, n. 18. This, however, could well be explained as due to his physical disabilities and also to the wish of his family to keep him as far as possible from appearing in public.

[8] Suet. *Claud.* 5-6.

[9] Suet. *Claud.* 8-9.

[10] Suet. *Claud.* 10; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 212; Dio LX, 1, 2-3; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 3, 16; *Epit.* 4, 2.

[11] Suet. *Claud.* 37.

[12] Dio LX, 16, 7. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 42. For the verse see Hom. *Il.* XXIV, 369; *Od.* XVI, 72 and XXI, 133.

[13] Dio LX, 3, 2-3.

and probably throughout his reign,[14] he took the greatest precautions against attack. He never ventured to be present at a banquet unless soldiers were in attendance upon him, and never visited anyone who was ill without first having the patient's room examined and his pillows and bedclothing felt over and shaken out. All men and women, and for a time even young boys and girls, were subjected to the closest scrutiny and search before they were admitted to his presence, and it was some time before he gave up the custom of having the cases for pens and styles taken from every man's attendant or scribe.[15] Perhaps it was by way of precaution that he instituted the custom of being carried through the streets in a covered litter.[16] It would appear that it was owing to his suspicion and distrust of the senators that he forbade the praetorians to enter the houses of the senators even for the customary morning salutation,[17] and that he himself requested from the senate the privilege of bringing into the curia with him the prefect of the praetorian guard and the tribunes of the soldiers,[18] though this

[14] In fact, Dio (*l. c.*) states that the custom set by Claudius of always having soldiers present at banquets continued to his day, and that that of invariable search was discontinued by Vespasian. Cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 12: "*consuetudinem scrutandi salutantis manente adhuc bello civili omiserat.*"

[15] Suet. *Claud.* 35; Dio LX, 3, 2. Cf. Julian *Caes.* 310 B; also Suet. *Aug.* 35 and Dio LIV, 12, 3, where similar, though not such extensive, precautions are said to have been taken by Augustus.

[16] Dio LX, 2, 3.

[17] Suet. *Claud.* 25.

[18] Suet. *Claud.* 12. Cf. Dio LX, 16, 3 and 23, 2; where, in 42 and 46 A. D., respectively, prefects are mentioned as accompanying Claudius into the senate house, though the latter instance refers not merely to the privilege of accompanying Claudius into the senate house, but more particularly to the actual granting to the prefect of a seat in the senate. Tiberius appears to have meditated a similar precaution in asking the senate in 33 A. D. to allow Macro, the prefect, and a few of the tribunes and centurions to enter the curia with him (Tac. *Ann.* VI, 15, 5; Dio LVIII, 18, 5); and to Caligula, in 40 A. D., the senators voluntarily granted the privilege of having a military guard in the curia (Dio LIX, 26, 3). See Mommsen, *Staatsr.* III, 909 and notes.

latter precaution may have been general and not directed specifically against the possibility of an attack by any of the senators themselves.

Claudius's timidity was not merely that normal initial fear, or shrinking, from which a man oftentimes recovers himself almost immediately or in which he at least retains his reason and control of himself. It was, on the contrary, panicky, wild, excited, rendering him at times *non compos mentis,* and, as we have just seen, helpless physically [19] as well as mentally. He was so terror-stricken at the revolution of Camillus and on several other occasions at unfounded reports of conspiracies, that he actually thought of abdicating. "When on one occasion a man with a dagger was caught near him as he was sacrificing, he summoned the senate in haste by criers and loudly and tearfully bewailed his lot, saying that there was no safety for him anywhere; and for a long time he would not appear in public." [20] Suetonius states definitely—and this statement is borne out by our other accounts [21]—that it was chiefly fear of a conspiracy against himself and his throne that induced Claudius to take action against Messalina on the occasion of her marriage with Silius. "At this time he made a shameful and cowardly flight to the praetorian camp, doing nothing all the way but asking if his throne was secure." [22] At the celebration at Lake Fucinus, when the rush of water through the outlet threatened to sweep away Claudius and his party, who were banqueting nearby, the old emperor joined in the general panic. Indeed, he appears to have been reduced to such a state of terror that Agrippina felt it a most opportune time to turn him against her archenemy, Narcissus, who had had charge of the work, and accord-

[19] Cf. also Chap. I, section on *Weakness, or Partial Paralysis, of Legs.*

[20] Suet. *Claud.* 35 and 36; Dio LX, 15, 4.

[21] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 29, 2-33, 1.

[22] Suet. *Claud.* 36. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 31, 3.

ingly she charged him with "graft" in connection with its construction.[23]

Claudius's timidity and his weakness and helplessness when under the influence of great fright were well-known not only to the members of his own household, but to the Roman public, and of these defects advantage was duly taken. Toward the end of Caligula's reign the latter's freedman Callistus succeeded in ingratiating himself with Claudius by revealing to him the secrets of an alleged plot against his life on the part of Caligula,[24] and by showing how he (Callistus) up to that time had succeeded in postponing the execution of the plot. After Claudius became emperor his wives and freedmen, according to Dio, took advantage of this failing and accomplished many of their designs by terrifying him. Whenever Messalina and the freedmen desired to bring about the death of anyone, they would proceed to frighten the emperor, with the result that they were allowed to do as they pleased in the matter. Often Claudius himself, suddenly terrified beyond reason, would actually order the execution, and later upon recovering from his fright would show by his conduct that he had been completely unconscious of what he was doing.[25]

The methods employed in thus frightening Claudius are illustrated in the story of the execution of Appius Silanus, well told by Suetonius. Silanus, a dear and close friend of the emperor, had married Messalina's mother. Later he had offended his step-daughter, as Dio[26] explains it, by refusing her advances, and Messalina apparently engaged the services of Narcissus in her design of vengeance. "When they had put their heads together to destroy him, they agreed on their parts and Narcissus rushed into his patron's bedchamber before daybreak in pretended conster-

[23] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 57, 3-4. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 32, where it is said that Claudius was nearly drowned (*paene submersus*).

[24] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 67-68.

[25] Dio LX, 2, 6; 14, 1.

[26] Dio LX, 14.

nation, declaring that he had dreamed that Appius had made an attack on the emperor. Then Messalina, with assumed surprise, declared that she had had the same dream for several successive nights. A little later, as had been arranged, Appius, who had received orders the day before to come at that time, was reported to be forcing his way in; and as if this were proof positive of the truth of the dream, his immediate accusation and death were ordered. And Claudius did not hesitate to recount the whole affair to the senate next day and to thank the freedman for watching over his emperor's safety even in his sleep." [27] Suetonius tells also how in a similar way one of two parties to a suit, who evidently knew the emperor's weakness, "took Claudius aside when he made his morning call, and said that he had dreamed that he had seen Claudius being murdered by someone. Then, a little later, pretending to recognize the assassin, he pointed out his opponent as he was handing in his petition; and the latter was immediately seized as if caught red-handed and hurried off to execution." [28]

It appears that Camillus, when he began his revolution, relied on his ability to intimidate Claudius without resorting to war, and by an insulting, threatening, and impudent letter he did very early persuade the emperor to abdicate.[29] The story also is told that by arousing his fears Messalina persuaded her husband to sign with his own hand her marriage-contract with Silius, inducing him to do so on the ground that it was only a mock marriage and was designed to avert and turn upon another a danger which from certain portents was inferred to threaten the emperor himself. Apparently they portended harm "to the husband of Messalina," and Claudius was led to suppose that through

[27] Suet. *Claud.* 37. Cf. Dio LX, 14; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 29, 1: "*Narcissus . . . . . Appianae caedis molitor.*"

[28] Suet. *l. c.*

[29] Suet. *Claud.* 35. Cf. Dio LX, 15, 4.

this trick of a fictitious marriage the danger could be transferred to Silius.[30]

It is well told in Tacitus's account of the Messalina-Silian conspiracy how cleverly Narcissus laid his plans to frighten Claudius into taking vengeance on his wife. He

[30] Suet. *Claud.* 29. This remarkable story is not told elsewhere, and apparently Suetonius does not insist upon its acceptance. He introduces the story with the words, "*Nam illud omnem fidem excesserit,*" and in chap. 26, where the marriage of Silius and Messalina is again mentioned, he seems to accept the more orthodox version and to imply that Claudius was not present at the signing of the contract, by the words, "*Quam* [*Messalinam*] *cum comperisset* [*Claudius*] . . . . *C. Silio etiam nupsisse dote inter auspices consignata, supplicio affecit.*" However, the story is not at all impossible. According to Cicero, as quoted in Quintilian, *Inst.* V, 11, 32 (cf. *Dig.* 39, 5, 31; *Cod. Just.* 5, 4, 13), a marriage was not valid even if the contract (*tabellae*) had been signed, in case it should be established that there had been no intention of matrimony (*mentem matrimonii non fuisse*); and in these circumstances it is quite possible that Claudius, just before leaving for Ostia, acquiesced, together with other witnesses, in this purely formal and fictitious ceremony for the sake of averting the evil omen from his own head. Messalina's purpose in obtaining his signature may have been to give the impression later that Claudius had voluntarily divorced her and even consented to give her to Silius, or it may have been merely to gratify her passion for the extreme, for doing something a little bolder and more outrageous than either she or anyone else had ever done before. It is possible that at the full ceremony which she celebrated with Silius a day or so later,—though this is not entirely consistent with the account of Tacitus, who evidently did not know or else rejected the Suetonius version (see *Ann.* XI, 27, 1),—she displayed this contract, previously witnessed with the signatures of her husband and others. Although the signing and witnessing of the contract appear to have taken place usually on the actual wedding-day, it is known that these acts could properly be performed after the marriage (*post contractum matrimonium, Dig.* 24, 1, 66), and there is no good reason to believe that they could not take place also a day or so before. However, it is not necessary to suppose that Messalina was careful to follow scrupulously either custom or law. See Marq. *Privat.* I, 48, n. 2. Double (p. 138) seeks to explain the whole matter by saying that in all probability Claudius had entrusted to Messalina his official seal and that she herself affixed to the contract the impress of it, which took the place of his signature.

massed his witnesses and his arguments in such a way as to work, not upon Claudius's sense of self-respect, nor of dignity, nor of right and wrong, but upon his fears for himself and his throne, with the result that he was undoubtedly thoroughly overcome with terror,[31] now railing at Messalina, now recurring to the thought of his married life and of his children,[32] now maintaining a strange silence,[33] now asking whether he was still emperor and whether Silius was still a private citizen.[34]

While the blandishments of Agrippina were in all probability chiefly responsible for Claudius's decision to marry her, it appears that his choice was in large part determined by the thought that it would be dangerous if she should marry anyone else. This thought was cleverly suggested as the climax of his argument in favor of Agrippina by the freedman Pallas, who knew the emperor well enough to anticipate the effect of such a suggestion. According to Tacitus's summary of the arguments for Agrippina, "Pallas laid particular stress on the fact that she would bring with her a grandson of Germanicus, a youth fully worthy of imperial position; and he urged the emperor to unite to himself a noble race, the posterity of the Julii and the Claudii, lest she, a woman of proved fertility, and in the bloom of youth, should transfer the illustrious name of the Cæsars to another house."[35] Moreover, when Claudius appeared even

[31] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 29, 3-31, 3. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 36; Dio LX, 31, 5.
[32] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 34, 1.
[33] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 35, 1.
[34] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 31, 3. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 36.
[35] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 2, 3: "*At Pallas id maxime in Agrippina laudare, quod Germanici nepotem secum traheret, dignum prorsus imperatoria fortuna: stirpem nobilem et familiae Iuliae Claudiaeque posteros coniungeret, ne femina expertae fecunditatis, integra iuventa, claritudinem Cæsarum aliam in domum ferret.*" I have adopted, with Furneaux (see note, *l. c.*) and others (cf. *Critical Edition of Annals,* by C. D. Fisher, Oxford, 1906), Freinsheim's insertion of *Iuliae* and alteration of *quae* to *que.* At any rate, the part of the passage which is important in this particular connection, the clause *ne . . . . ferret,* is unaffected by the manuscript difficulties mentioned.

then to hesitate, Tacitus represents him as finally acquiescing in the face of threats from several of the senators, after Vitellius's exhortation in favor of Agrippina, to compel him forcibly if he delayed further.[36]

When the old courtier Vitellius was brought to trial in 51 on a charge of treason and of aiming at the throne, and Claudius showed a disposition to listen to the accusation, he appears to have been cowed finally by the threats of Agrippina into a quashing of the case against Vitellius and the indictment of the senator Junius Lupus, the accuser.[37] The punishment meted out was the interdiction of fire and water, a sentence of exile involving loss of property.[38] "This," says Tacitus, "was all that Vitellius asked," implying that the emperor might have decreed a more severe penalty if only Vitellius had wished it, so completely had Claudius's course been reversed by the threats of his wife.

There is only one passage in the ancient authors which appears directly to contradict the general tradition of Claudius's timidity, or cowardice. In giving his account of the year 47 A. D., Dio states that information was brought that certain men were plotting against the emperor, but that in the majority of instances he paid no attention, saying, "It is not necessary to adopt the same defensive methods against a flea as against a wild beast."[39] However, Claudius's own words here are a strong indication that the men accused and the nature of the charge against them were too insignificant even for him to notice. Despite Suetonius's words to the contrary,[40] it is of course very probable that Claudius dismissed more than one charge of conspiracy. It is not to be supposed that a man inclined to timidity and cow-

[36] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 7, 1-3.
[37] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 42, 5.
[38] See Momm. *Staatsr.* III, 1, 52, n. 2.
[39] Dio LX, 29, 4.
[40] Suet. *Claud.* 37.

ardice necessarily yields to the inclination on every possible occasion.

There has been a disposition on the part of at least two modern writers to deny partially, if not entirely, the charge of cowardice.[41] They do so on the ground that Claudius is known to have possessed moral courage to a considerable degree, as is evidenced, for instance, by his plans to extend the boundaries of the empire [42] and stamp out Druidism,[43]—two courses of action which Augustus was apparently wary of attempting;[44]—by his undertaking of large public works, notably the construction of the new harbor at Ostia in the face of the positive discouragements of the architects;[45] and by his determined stand in favor of admitting the chiefs of Gallia Comata to the right of holding public office, despite bitter opposition apparently both in his own cabinet and in the senate.[46] This argument, however, fails to offset the testimony of our ancient authorities. Claudius's timidity, or cowardice, was in great part physical, or nervous; certainly the immediate effect upon him was much the same as was produced by other kinds of nervous excitement.[47]

[41] Rydberg, p. 73: "With this nervous irritability was connected also his sudden fear, which has unjustly been interpreted as cowardice, for it was balanced by a moral courage that on most occasions held it in check." Cf. Double, *passim,* who appears to ignore the charge, or implicitly to deny it, by such passages as those on pp. 159-161.

[42] Notably by his expeditions into Britain (see Dio LX, 19-23; Suet. *Claud.* 17) and Mauretania (see Dio LX, 8-9; Plin. *N. H.* V, 11; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 2).

[43] Suet. *Claud.* 25. Cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 2. See Plin. *N. H.* XXIX, 54, for an example of Claudius's unrelenting prosecution of Druidism.

[44] See Tac. *Ann.* I, 11, 4: "*Quae cuncta* [i. e., the contents of the Breviarium Imperii] *sua manu perscripserat Augustus addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii, incertum metu an per invidiam.*" See Gardthausen, *Augustus,* p. 668; Suet. *Claud. l. c.;* and Pelham, *The Early Roman Emperors,* in *Quart. Rev.* 202 (1905), p. 536.

[45] Dio LX, 11, 3.

[46] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 23-25, 2.

[47] See Dio LX, 2, 6. Cf. Chaps. II, IV, V, VI.

When free from excitement, when concerned with abstract or academic problems like the question of public improvements or public measures, in which his own personal safety was not immediately involved, he could doubtless be as calm and courageous as anyone, and, in fact, even stubborn.

The contention of Double,[48] that Claudius showed great fortitude in the face of Tiberius's hatred of Germanicus in going to meet Agrippina on her return with the ashes of Germanicus, and the implication contained in Rydberg's statement that "from Claudius's campaign (short to be sure) in Britain, Suetonius, the zealous story-hunter, has not been able to give us a single trait to justify the reproach of cowardice,"[49] scarcely merit consideration. Tiberius, if for no other reason than a wish to allay public suspicion,[50] made every effort to show the fullest respect publicly to the remains of Germanicus, sending two praetorian cohorts to meet Agrippina, and enjoining the magistrates of Calabria, Apulia, and Campania to pay the highest honors to the memory of his adopted son.[51] The emperor's own son Drusus and the children of Germanicus who had been left in Rome when he went to the east, accompanied Claudius,[52] and it may most reasonably be inferred that they all went at the express command of Tiberius and that Claudius could not have refused to go had he wished.

As to Rydberg's *argumentum ex silentio* in regard to the British expedition, the resistance of the Britons, despite Plautius's fears,[53] seems not to have been in reality very determined;[54] the Roman army was at no time in a critical

[48] Double, p. 35.

[49] Rydberg, p. 73.

[50] Tac. *Ann.* III, 2, 5: "*laetam Tiberio Germanici mortem male dissimulari.*"

[51] Tac. *Ann.* III, 2, 1.

[52] Tac. *Ann.* III, 2, 4.

[53] Dio LX, 21, 1.

[54] Dio LX, 19-23. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 17: "*sine ullo proelio aut sanguine.*"

position; and Claudius himself, unless we are to take very literally certain words of Dio,[55] was probably not once within range of the actual fighting during the sixteen days[56] that he spent in the island.

On the entire evidence, then, it is reasonable to conclude that Claudius was timid and cowardly, certainly after he became emperor, and probably from childhood. But his fear was not merely that normal fear which is present in all of us to a greater or less extent and leads us to sensible, rational measures of self-defense or precaution.[57] In Claudius's case it appears at least to have approached the kind of fear which Grasset, in his treatment of phobias, or morbid fears, describes as "paralyzing and agonizing. Instead of being the starting-point of wise measures of defense, the unconscious reactions to this fear are inhibitive and frantic. This fear makes the subject perspire, presses on his chest, makes his limbs shake or give way, or if it makes him fly from danger he will fly foolishly and in the wrong direction. It is in this respect that such fear is distinctly diseased."[58]

On the other hand, Claudius does not appear to have suffered either from the so-called diffuse phobia, or panophobia, or from any one of the so-called systematized phobias, such as phobias of objects, of place, etc.[59] His timidity, or fear, seems to have arisen from perfectly natural causes, to have become exaggerated, *though not perverted*, through excitement, and to have resulted in exaggerated, if not abnormal reactions. In this, as in the case of his sexual instinct and relations, Claudius may perhaps more aptly be characterized as hypernormal.

[55] Dio LX, 21, 3-4: "περαιωθεὶς [Κλαύδιος] ἐς τὴν Βρεττανίαν, συνέμιξε τοῖς στρατοπέδοις πρὸς τῷ Ταμέσᾳ ἀναμένουσιν αὐτόν. καὶ παραλαβών σφας, ἐκεῖνόν τε ἐπιδιέβη, καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις πρὸς τὴν ἔφοδον αὐτοῦ συνεστραμμένοις ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθὼν, μάχῃ τε ἐνίκησε.

[56] Dio LX, 23, 1.

[57] See Grasset, pp. 104 and 105.

[58] Grasset, p. 106.

[59] See Grasset, pp. 104-108.

CHAPTER IV

Meteoria

According to Suetonius,[1] men marveled, among other things, at Claudius's absent-mindedness (*oblivio*) and want of reflection (*inconsiderantia*). These two expressions he attempts to explain, respectively, by the Greek terms μετεωρία (*distraction,* the state of being *distrait,* of being mentally up in the clouds), and ἀβλεψία (*aveuglement,* blindness, thoughtlessness, the failure to see clearly or to take in a situation in all its aspects); and he further illustrates by examples. From his collocation of these seemingly distinct traits of Claudius it is evident that Suetonius felt them to be in some way connected; and besides it is interesting to note that whereas he uses μετεωρία to mean more particularly *oblivio,* pure absent-mindedness, or forgetfulness, the same term had been used by Augustus in a letter which Suetonius[2] quotes and which in all probability suggested the expression to him, to refer rather to Claudius's *inconsiderantia.* I have felt, therefore, that μετεωρία may well be taken as a general term aptly covering the two phenomena.

Of Claudius's *oblivio,* or forgetfulness, Suetonius gives two instances, the first, that "when Claudius had put Messalina to death, he asked shortly after taking his place at the table why the empress did not come"; the second, that he "caused many of those whom he had condemned to death to be summoned the very next day to consult with him or game with him and sent a messenger to upbraid them for sleepy-heads, as though they were late for their engagement."[3]

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 39.
[2] Suet. *Claud.* 4.
[3] Suet. *Claud.* 39.

The Messalina incident may be ruled out because of a very striking discrepancy between Suetonius's account and that of Tacitus,[4] and the force of the other instance is certainly discounted by the indubitable evidence that Claudius's apparent forgetfulness was due at times to ignorance. This ignorance arose either from the fact that in the excitement of great terror he had not been really conscious of what he was doing,[5] or that a number of executions attributed to him were actually procured by his wives or freedmen without his previous knowledge.[6]

Such an instance is that given by Tacitus in recounting the trial of Valerius Asiaticus. The latter was accused, among other things, of adultery with Poppaea, the wife of P. Cornelius Scipio, who had incurred Messalina's hatred by her affair with the empress's favorite, Mnester, the pantomimus.[7] During the trial of Asiaticus, Messalina took the opportunity to "hasten the destruction of Poppaea, suborning persons to drive her to suicide. And so little did Cæsar know," continues Tacitus, "that a few days afterward, when Scipio, Poppaea's husband, was dining with him, he asked him why he had come without his wife, and Scipio answered that she had met her fate."[8] Tacitus makes it clear that this was ignorance, not forgetfulness, on the part of Claudius; though it is probably not unjust to hold the emperor responsible for at least appearing to forget even that she had any connection with the trial of Asiaticus, which was either at that time in progress or had been finished only a very few days before.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 37-38. If Claudius did ask why Messalina did not come, his question was due to ignorance, not forgetfulness; for according to Tacitus, it was Narcissus who gave the order for the empress's execution without the knowledge of the emperor. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 26, where Suetonius, probably inaccurately, ascribes the punishment of Messalina directly to Claudius.

[5] Dio LX, 14, 1-2.

[6] Suet. *Claud.* 29; Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 4; 11, 1.

[7] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 4, 2.

[8] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 2.

We may well conclude, then, not that Claudius was not absent-minded,—for it would be quite in keeping with his character that he should be,—but that this characteristic has been exaggerated, or misunderstood, and that its existence is certainly not proved by the examples which Suetonius cites. Nor is Suetonius helped or supplemented by the two passages in the *Apocolocyntosis* in which the trait is satirized;[9] for both of them are based on the old theme of Claudius's forgetfulness of executions, and one of them in fact suggests that it was really ignorance and not forgetfulness.[10]

In giving examples of what he evidently means to be taken as illustrative more particularly of Claudius's *inconsiderantia,* Suetonius[11] proceeds as follows: "When Claudius was on the very point of contracting his unholy marriage with Agrippina, in every speech that he made he constantly called her his daughter and foster child, born and brought up in his arms. Likewise when he was on the point of adopting Nero, as if there were not sufficient fault to be found in the fact that he was adopting a stepson when he had already a grown-up son of his own, he publicly declared more than once that no one had ever before been taken into the Claudian family by adoption. . . . . When a debate was going on about the butchers and vintners, he cried out right in the senate house, 'Now, I ask you, who can live without his snack?' and then he went on to describe the great number of old taverns from which he himself also had been accustomed to get his wine in former days. He gave as one of his reasons for supporting a certain candidate for the quaestorship the fact that the man's father had given him a timely drink of cold water once when he was ill. On one occasion, when a woman had been brought as a witness before the senate, he said: 'This woman was my mother's freedwoman and maid, but she

[9] Sen. *Apocol.* 11, 1; 13, 6.
[10] Cf. Chap. V, notes 17 and 18.
[11] Suet. *Claud.* 39-40.

always regarded me as her patron; I have mentioned this because there are still some in my household who do not so regard me.' And even on the very tribunal, when the people of Ostia were presenting a public petition to him, he flew into a rage and bawled out that they had no claims on him; that he was surely free, if anyone was. Every day, and almost every hour and minute such expressions as these were on his lips: 'What, do you take me for a Telegenius?' and 'Speak, but don't touch me.'" Suetonius sums up by stating that there are on record many other incidents of the same kind, "which would be unbecoming even in private citizens, not to mention a prince, who besides lacked neither eloquence nor culture, but on the contrary constantly devoted himself to liberal pursuits."

The foregoing examples of Claudius's *inconsiderantia,* or apparent carelessness of what he was doing or saying, may be said to fall, according to Suetonius's arrangement, into three groups, though these groups are by no means mutually exclusive. The first (chapter 39, *ducturus—insertum*) includes incidents showing more particularly amusing naïveté, lack of tact, and lack of a sense of humor on the part of Claudius; the second (chapter 40, *cum de laniis—liberum esse*) contains examples of his incongruous and undignified conduct on public occasions; and the third (chapter 40, *nam illa—θίγγανε*) shows examples of his use of slang and vulgar expressions. In addition to the characteristics already mentioned, the first group may be said to show also thoughtlessness, lack of common sense, and perhaps the sort of self-consciousness that makes a man say the very thing which he most wants to avoid; the second shows also a tendency to irrelevant and discursive remarks, whimsicality, lack of sense of proportion, emotional sentimentality, sensitiveness, or consciousness of weakness, and inability to control his temper.

The third class is more puzzling and needs perhaps some explanation at this point, especially because we have not, as in the case of the first two groups, additional examples to

serve as further illustration.[12] In characterizing the two examples of this third group as "slang," or "vulgar expressions," I have thought of them as comparable to such frequent modern expressions as, for example, "I should worry," the exact meaning of which does not appear on its face any more clearly than that of the two phrases used by Claudius. To be sure, the attempt has been made to interpret the *Quid, ego tibi Telegenius videor?* as an assertion by the sensitive Claudius that he was not the fool he was usually taken for,—Telegenius being understood as the name either of a person proverbial for his folly or of a stupid friend or acquaintance of Claudius,—and λάλει καὶ μὴ θίγγανε has been translated "Speak," or "Scold me, but please don't touch me," and explained as a reminiscence from youth, when Claudius was constantly beaten and in all probability frequently used this expression.[13] Both explanations are possible, and that of the first expression may safely be accepted as in the main correct; but the explanation of the second seems hardly satisfactory. In fact, it is safer not to insist upon too literal, or too accurate, an interpretation of either of the expressions. It is quite in keeping with the character of Claudius, who was not averse to the use of slang and vulgar or popular phrases,[14] that he should have picked up two such phrases, perhaps from a popular song, or something of the sort, and repeated them constantly in his whimsical way with more or less appropriateness.

[12] Unless we should include Claudius's question in the senate, "*Rogo vos quis potest sine offula vivere?*" (Suet. *Claud.* 40) and his advice to the young rake, "*aut parcius aetatulae indulgeret aut certe cautius*" (Suet. *Claud.* 16). The first example may possibly be proverbial,—certainly the word *offula* is vulgar,—and the second suggests that Claudius had in mind some such proverbial expression as *si non caste, certe caute,* identical with our modern "If you can't be good, be careful."

[13] Wiedmeister, pp. 157 and 161.

[14] See note 12.

The testimony of Suetonius with reference to the first two groups is corroborated and supplemented by numerous examples of *inconsiderantia* to be found elsewhere in Suetonius and in our other authorities; and it will be illuminating even briefly to enumerate these additional examples. For the sake of convenience they will be taken up in accordance with the grouping followed by Suetonius.

Josephus[15] furnishes us with an example of the first group in recounting an incident that took place at the very outset of Claudius's reign. During the negotiations between Claudius and the senate, Agrippa, who was acting as intermediary, brought word to Claudius that the senate would offer resistance to his becoming emperor. To this Claudius instructed Agrippa to reply that he would fight, if need be, though reluctantly, and added the naïve suggestion that a place for the strife should be appointed outside the city in order that the temples might not be polluted with blood shed at the hands of fellow countrymen,—an evidence of piety, if you will, but an indication also of his lack of common sense and of his tendency to think theoretically rather than practically.

It so happens that through his being a stickler for piety Claudius in not less than three other instances laid himself open to ridicule for inconsistency or at least for a certain apparent inability to realize his inconsistency. Despite his own evident fondness for witnessing gladiatorial combats,[16] he gave orders for a statue of Augustus which overlooked the Circus Maximus to be removed to another place. This he did on the ground that he did not wish it to appear that Augustus was viewing the slaughter and that, if the statue remained where it was, it would have to be veiled, which likewise seemed undesirable. He also ordered the death of a lion that had been trained to eat men, on the ground that it was not fitting that Romans should look upon such a spec-

[15] Joseph. *B. J.* II, 209-210.
[16] See Chap. V.

tacle.[17] On the very day of, or certainly only a few days after, his marriage with his niece Agrippina, a union looked upon generally as practically incestuous,[18] Claudius expelled from Italy Junia Calvina on the charge of incest with her brother Silanus, and "in addition he ordered certain rites and expiations to be performed by the priests in the grove of Diana, in accordance with the ordinances of King Tullus. That care should be taken at this time to devise penalties and expiations for incest," adds Tacitus, "met with universal ridicule."[19]

During his censorship the emperor appears to have been troubled as to how to remove from the senate in as mild a way as possible even those of notoriously evil character who refused to resign; and the exuberance of his kindness led him into making the statement that he would mitigate the indignity of those whom he was thus forced to expel by publishing their names in the same list with those who had retired voluntarily.[20] That in proportion as the disgrace of the former was thus decreased, the disgrace of the latter was increased, does not seem to have occurred to him.

In the year 52 Claudius made a motion in the senate, and carried it, that certain penalties should be inflicted upon free women who entered into concubinage with slaves of another person. With more generosity than tact or a sense of the fitness of things he announced that his freedman Pallas was the real author of the proposal, and then, when the servile senate proposed to grant to the freedman certain honors and the sum of 15,000,000 sesterces besides, the emperor must have caused considerable amusement by asserting solemnly that Pallas,—who at that very time, according to Tacitus, was the possessor of 300,000,000 sesterces,—would

[17] Dio LX, 13, 3-4.
[18] See Chap. II, n. 19.
[19] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 4 and 8, 1-2.
[20] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 25, 5-6.

be content with the honors alone and would be satisfied to remain within the bounds of his accustomed poverty.[21]

In the following year Claudius proposed in the senate that the people of Cos should be relieved from taxation. He traced the legendary history of the island, spoke of the coming of Aesculapius, mentioned the names of the individual Asclepiadae, who existed as a caste of physician priests, and then, instead of recounting, as might have been expected, such services as the Coans had actually rendered to Rome, with an almost charming naïveté, he made no attempt to conceal the fact that it was to please his own physician Xenophon that he asked immunity for the Coans. "This man," he said, "is a descendant of the family of the Asclepiadae, and his request should be granted, in order that the people of Cos, free from all tribute, may in the future cherish their island as sacred and as devoted only to the service of their god." [22]

The last instance belonging more particularly to the first group is one occurring toward the end of Claudius's life. In the chapter which he devotes to the indications of Claudius's repentance of the adoption of Nero, Suetonius [23] states that the emperor on one occasion promised the *toga virilis* to Britannicus and added, "that the Roman people may at last have a genuine Cæsar." Though Suetonius apparently did not see the unintentional humor in this characterization of Britannicus, it must have aroused the amusement of those who heard it and was quite likely preserved as an example of Claudius's *inconsiderantia*. While the meaning of Claudius is perfectly clear, that he wanted his own son, rather than a son by adoption, to inherit the throne, it was tactless of him, to say the least, to arouse

[21] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 53. Cf. Pliny *Ep.* VII, 29; VIII, 6. It is possible, however, that the words *intra priorem paupertatem* represent a bit of grim humor on Claudius's part which failed to be appreciated as such.

[22] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 61.

[23] Suet. *Claud.* 43.

memories of the fact that neither he nor his son was a "genuine Cæsar"; for Claudius had never been adopted into the Julian house, but had assumed the name Cæsar upon his accession, without any real claim to it.[24]

For additional examples of the second group, of Claudius's incongruous and undignified conduct on public occasions, Suetonius is again our principal authority. He states that "in hearing and deciding cases Claudius showed strange inconsistency of temper, for he was now careful and shrewd, sometimes inconsiderate and hasty, and occasionally silly and like a crazy man." He gives examples of Claudius's wise decisions quite worthy of a Solomon, and then relates two incidents to illustrate his lack of deliberation and his impetuosity, respectively: "Whenever one party to a suit was absent, Claudius was prone to decide in favor of the one who was present, without considering whether his opponent had failed to appear through his own fault or from a necessary cause. On a man's being convicted of forgery, someone cried out that his hands ought to be cut off; whereupon Claudius insisted that an executioner be summoned at once with knife and block."[25]

The second incident is quite in keeping with Claudius's impulsiveness and readiness to adopt a suggestion which at the time appealed strongly to him, not to mention also his morbid pleasure in watching suffering and his belief in the severe punishment of crimes that were particularly abhorrent to him.[26] But in the first incident Suetonius has failed to make his point. It is evident that he had in mind the well-worn charge, for which there is justification, that Claudius often decided cases after hearing only one side or at times neither side;[27] but the instance given is not apt. It

[24] See Klebs, *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, I, p. 390. Cf. Frank in *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. II (April 1908), pp. 89 ff.

[25] Suet. *Claud.* 15.

[26] See Chap. V.

[27] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 22, 2; Suet. *Claud.* 29; 37; 38; Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 4; 12, 3, ll. 35 ff.; 14, 2-3. See also Chap. V for other incidents which may have given rise to this charge.

is difficult to be shocked at hearing of a case won by default,[28] and moreover, there is reason to suspect that Suetonius here has misconstrued what appears to have been a justifiable course of action adopted by Claudius, which Dio afterwards put in its proper light. According to Dio, since the court docket in the year 46 had become cluttered with innumerable cases and "those who expected to lose their cases did not put in an appearance,"—evidently thinking thus to put off the evil day,—"Claudius proclaimed by edict that by a given day he would decide the case against those who were absent, and this procedure he established."[29] While it is possible, as Smilda[30] suggests, that Suetonius finds fault with Claudius because he apparently took no trouble to ascertain whether the person was absent from carelessness or was detained by necessity, it is equally possible to defend the emperor on the ground that he could hardly be expected to make exceptions to his rule, especially after he had given due notice of it some time before it was to go into effect.

On one occasion Claudius is said to have become angry at a certain lawyer, Julius Gallicus, and to have ordered him thrown into the nearby Tiber.[31] The reason for this outburst of passion is not known, but certainly the emperor's conduct is far from excusable on any grounds.

Perhaps we should add here the incident, related by Suetonius[32] in another connection, in which Claudius, either in ignorance of the law[33] or for want of proper deliberation

[28] Double (p. 230) says this is good French law; and judgment by default is well recognized in the United States today under certain conditions. See *Cycl. of Law and Procedure*, 23, p. 734 ff.

[29] Dio LX, 28, 6.

[30] Smilda, p. 69, note on *culpa*.

[31] Dio LX, 33, 8.

[32] Suet. *Claud.* 15.

[33] See *Dig.* 22, 5, 3, sect. 5: "*alii vero propter notam et infamiam vitae suae admittendi non sunt ad testimonii fidem.*"

and care,[34] admitted the testimony of common strumpets against a Roman knight who was being tried on a trumped up charge of improper conduct towards women. The defendant is said to have become incensed and "to have hurled the stylus and tablets which he held in his hand into the emperor's face with such force that he cut his cheek badly, and at the same time loudly to have reviled his stupidity and cruelty."

Suetonius gives also two examples of what he has termed Claudius's "silliness" in judging cases: "In a case involving citizenship a trivial dispute arose among the advocates as to whether the defendant ought to make his appearance in a toga or in a Greek mantle, and the emperor, with the idea of showing absolute impartiality, made him change his garb several times, according as the defense or prosecution was in the act of presenting its case. In one case he is credited with having rendered the following decision, which he had actually written out beforehand, that he decided in favor of those who had told the truth."[35]

It will not be denied that Claudius's conduct in these two incidents was hardly in keeping with the dignity of the bench; but it is possible to see in it also a whimsical humor, out of place though it doubtless was, coupled with a desire on the part of the emperor to administer what he probably considered a justifiable rebuke. It is quite likely that in the first instance Claudius intended to make the advocates ridiculous for quarreling over the trifling technicality as to what the defendant properly should wear; and in the second instance the decision which he handed down looks like a humorous admission on his part that it was impossible to decide from testimony that had been flatly contradictory, with the implication, of course, that one or the other of the

[34] It is more likely that Claudius did not take time to inquire into and did not realize the status of the witnesses, rather than that he was ignorant of the law.

[35] Suet. *Claud.* 15.

parties to the suit had been guilty of perjury. This was probably Claudius's way of announcing that the hearing had resulted in what would be termed today a mistrial and that the case would have to be tried over again. Claudius's humor in such instances, as we shall see also below, was by no means lacking in keenness. However, probably from the fact that he was inclined to carry it too far and to use it inauspiciously, it seems rarely to have been appreciated as such, but was probably looked upon either as unconscious and unintentional or as an extravagance of the fool that he was thought to be.[36]

The amusing incident of Claudius's leaving the tribunal on one occasion in order to partake of a meal which he smelled cooking in a nearby temple, while it is quite susceptible of being explained away,[37] is nevertheless not out of keeping with his impulsiveness and lack of dignity in public, not to mention also his fondness for food.[38] It is quite like him to have been prompted to the sudden resolve to attend the dinner and to have made self-consciously[39] some humorous and at the same time frank reference to his reason for leaving the bench so unceremoniously.

According to Suetonius,[40] Claudius was inconsistent also in his administration of the censorship, showing variableness in both theory and practice. Three examples given are of interest here: "In his review of the knights he let off a young man of evil character, whose father persisted that he was perfectly satisfied with him, without any public censure, saying that he had a censor of his own. Another who was notorious for corruption and adultery he merely admon-

[36] Cf. note 21.

[37] Double (p. 232) explains this act of Claudius as representing an intention on his part to raise the public estimation of the priests by showing that he dined with them. A far better explanation would be that he left the tribunal hurriedly in order to keep a previous engagement which for the time he had forgotten.

[38] See Chap. I.

[39] See this chapter, *passim*.

[40] Suet. *Claud.* 16.

ished to be more restrained in his indulgence, or at any rate less brazen;[41] 'for why,' he added, 'should I know what mistress you keep?' When he had yielded to the entreaties of one man's friends and removed the mark of censure which he had affixed to his name, he said, 'But let the erasure remain.'"

We have here again examples of Claudius's whimsical humor and apparent inability to resist the temptation to engage in little jokes and pleasantries even on solemn occasions. That they show him to have possessed keen wit does not of course absolve him from the criticism of having used it unseasonably and of having treated with levity matters of serious moment. However, it is quite possible to see in these examples a disposition on Claudius's part also to show such sympathy and leniency as Augustus had shown on a similar occasion in his reign.[42]

Claudius's lack of dignity as displayed in extemporaneous efforts before the senate has already been referred to in this chapter, but it appears that his *inconsiderantia* was present even in his prepared speeches to that body. The classic example is the carefully prepared speech which he delivered during his censorship in favor of admitting the leading men of Gallia Comata to the senate. Of this speech Tacitus[43] has preserved a summary; but what is more important for our purpose, there is extant a very considerable fragment of the actual speech engraved on bronze tablets which were dug up at Lyons in 1524 and are now preserved in the museum of that city.[44]

The speech as a whole is quite characteristic of Claudius. In the first place, its general conception is good and is evidently based upon the speech in favor of intermarriage be-

[41] See note 12.

[42] Suet. *Aug.* 39.

[43] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 24.

[44] See Boissieu, *Inscriptions Antiques de Lyon* (Lyon, 1846-1854), Chap. IV, pp. 133-144; *C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, 1668; Bruns, *Fontes Iuris Romani Antiqui* (7th edit. Tübingen, 1909), pp. 195-198.

tween patrician and plebeian attributed by Claudius's old master, the historian Livy,[45] to the tribune Canuleius. The arguments are cleverly massed, there is display of considerable learning, and there is evidence of literary taste; but there are also the characteristic historical detail, with parenthetical "foot-notes," as it were, the citation of differing authorities,[46] and finally unnecessary and undignified digressions,[47] bearing, it may be, the stamp of good-humored informality,[48] but certainly not worthy of the occasion nor of the imperial orator.

With almost delightful naïveté Claudius dragged in bodily reference to his British expedition. "Now," said he, after recounting briefly the various steps by which the plebeians came to stand on an equal footing with the patricians, "if I should narrate the wars from the beginning of our history up to the present, I fear I should seem to be far too arrogant and to have sought to display the glory of the imperial power's having been carried forward beyond the ocean." [49]

Groag [50] notes that when Claudius came to the part of his speech in which he wanted to show that Gaul had furnished excellent senators to the Roman state, he could refer to only one knight and one senator, the latter being Valerius Asiaticus, whom he himself had put to death. Groag might have called attention to the fact that it is still more characteristic of Claudius's *inconsiderantia,* or lack of tact, that he chose to name particularly the colony of Vienne as the place that had contributed senators to the Roman senate.[51] The mere mention of this town, the birth-place of Asiaticus,[52] could not fail to revive memories of this man's notorious trial and

[45] Livy IV, 3-5.
[46] See esp. Col. I, ll. 16-18; 22-23; Col. II, ll. 12-14.
[47] See esp. Col. II, ll. 10-18.
[48] See Boissieu, p. 137.
[49] Col. I, ll. 36-40.
[50] Groag in Pauly-Wiss. *Real-Encycl.* III, 2836.
[51] Col. II, l. 9.
[52] See Tac. *Ann.* XI, 1, 2.

death only a year before,[53] and made it impossible for Claudius to avoid a reference to him. His attempt at overcoming the difficult situation was characterized by the ill grace to be expected of one who had been blind enough to get into it at all. "Not to mention the name of a robber," he said, "I hate that wrestling wonder who brought the consulship into his family before his own colony had obtained the full benefit of Roman citizenship."[54]

Groag[55] sees in this vindictive reference to Asiaticus a sudden and characteristic outburst of Claudius's anger at being reminded of the man; but it seems more likely, especially when we reflect that this speech was not delivered extemporaneously, that he here simply overreached himself in his attempt to justify and uphold the action he had taken a year before. It had probably become by that time a matter of common knowledge that Asiaticus's virtual execution had been procured by Messalina and her agents against the emperor's better judgment and in the face of a disposition to acquit him, and Claudius, self-conscious as he was, went to the extreme of protesting his hatred of Asiaticus in order to make it appear that he, after all, had been in favor of the senator's conviction and was really responsible for his death.[56]

Directly after this outburst comes the famous and ridiculous apostrophe which Claudius addressed to himself in this speech: "It is time now, Ti. Cæsar Germanicus, to disclose to the conscript fathers whither your speech is tending; for already you have come to the farthest boundaries of Gallia

[53] See Tac. *Ann.* XI, 1-3; Dio LX, 29, 4-6.

[54] Col. II, ll. 14-17.

[55] Groag, *l. c.*

[56] In other words, Claudius was anxious that it should not be thought that he had been duped by his advisers. It was probably partly for this reason, in addition to its being a matter of policy and expediency, that he upheld and assumed responsibility for the acts of his wives and freedmen on other occasions. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 29.

Narbonensis."[57] Mommsen[58] seeks to explain away the absurdity by ascribing these words not to Claudius, but to the senators themselves, who had become impatient at his long digressions and thus called him to account. It seems hardly probable, however, that the senate would have had the temerity to cause these words of disapprobation to be recorded on the bronze tablets. Gaheis[59] suggests that the words would have sounded less absurd in the mouth of a reader, whom, as we have seen, Claudius often employed to deliver his speeches for him; but even with this explanation the absurdity remains, for the speech had evidently been written out beforehand and the words would be none the less Claudius's for having been read by the reader, unless we accept the quite impossible theory that they were the extempore comment of the reader himself.

In fact, it seems best to accept the passage as it stands, as an authentic part of Claudius's own prepared speech. Self-conscious as he was, knowing that he had been unduly long in coming to his point, wanting in his sensitive way to have it understood that he realized it, and perhaps wishing also to relieve the tension created by his remarks on Asiaticus, he took this grotesque method of calling himself to account. It is possible to see in this incident, including the words suggesting that he had already proceeded in his speech as far as the farthest boundaries of Gallia Narbonensis, an additional example of his far-fetched attempts at humor. The addressing of himself by name was undoubtedly intended to be humorous, and may also be taken as another evidence of his extreme self-consciousness.

A similar lack of sense of proportion and of the fitness of things is shown in Claudius's edicts and proclamations. Perhaps the most interesting of these is an edict of which a copy was dug up on April 29, 1869, near Cles in the so-called

[57] Col. II, ll. 19-21.
[58] Mommsen in *Ephem. Epig.* 7, 394.
[59] Gaheis in Pauly-Wiss. *Real-Encycl.* III, 2839.

Val di Non.[60] The edict was promulgated at Baiae, March 15th, 46 A. D.,[61] bears all the marks of having been written by Claudius himself,[62] and refers to a dispute of long standing between the people of Comum and the Bergalei and also to the disputed rights of citizenship of the tribes of the Anauni, Tulliasses, and the Sinduni. For not having settled the aforesaid dispute between the people of Comum and the Bergalei Claudius has the bad taste, if you will, to take to task his predecessors Tiberius and Caligula, just as in a previous edict[63] he had referred to the want of understanding and insanity of Caligula. Moreover, he seems to have been unable to resist the temptation to refer in a semi-humorous and utterly uncalled-for parenthesis to their uncertain temper. The part of the sentence in which the parenthesis occurs runs substantially as follows:[64] "Since Pinarius Apollinaris, whom my uncle Tiberius Cæsar sent to settle the dispute, neglected to make his report either to Tiberius or Gaius,—and he was no fool either,[65] for the report was not demanded of him,—I have now entrusted the adjustment of the matter to my friend and comrade, Julius Planta." It is hardly necessary to call attention to the whimsical humor of this parenthesis, not without point, to be sure, but certainly out of place in a formal edict. It adds substantially to the evidence that Claudius's *inconsiderantia* was by no means limited to acts or words performed or spoken extempore or under stress of excitement or embarrassment.

In his celebration of the secular games in 47 A. D.,[66] rightly celebrated only at intervals of 110 years,[67] it was not

[60] See Mommsen in *Hermes*, 4 (1870), pp. 99-120; *C. I. L.* V, 5050.
[61] Momm. *l. c.* p. 105.
[62] Momm. *l. c.* pp. 106-107.
[63] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 284.
[64] See ll. 7-17.
[65] L. 13: "*non stulte quidem.*"
[66] See Tac. *Ann.* XI, 11. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 21.
[67] Cf. Hor. *Carm. Saec.* 21-22. It is thought by some (cf. Momm. in *Ephem. Epig.* 8, 238) that Claudius reckoned a *saeculum* as 100 years and calculated from the foundation of the city as his starting-

enough for Claudius that he was giving the celebration only sixty-three [68] years after that of Augustus, in the face too of his own previously expressed approval of Augustus's calculation; [69] but he laid himself open to additional ridicule by sending out a herald with a proclamation to invite the people in the words of the usual formula to "games which no one had ever seen before or would see again." "For," adds Suetonius, "some were still living who had seen them before, and some actors who had appeared at the former performance appeared at that time as well." [70]

People must have marveled also at the subjects which Claudius thought proper to treat in an edict. Among twenty edicts which he published in one day during his censorship, Suetonius [71] selects two as worthy of especial notice, in one of which the emperor gave some advice as to the pitching of wine-jars and in the other suggested the best cure for snake-bite. It is quite possible to see in such edicts as these the same solicitude and sense of responsibility for the welfare of the people as the emperor showed in his general political philosophy and on several specific occasions; [72] but while his good intentions are undoubted, it is impossible not to feel with Suetonius that such edicts were in a peculiar way characteristic of Claudius, of his whimsicality, impulsiveness,

point, thus completely contradicting Augustus's method of reckoning; whereas others (cf. Hirschfeld in *Wien. Stud.* 3, 102) think that Claudius counted 110 years to the *saeculum*, but in order to have the games fall in the 800th year of the foundation of the city, chose another starting-point than the one which Augustus had taken for his computation.

[68] Augustus's games were held in 17 B. C. See *Mon. Ancyr.*, Momm. c. 22.

[69] Suet. *Claud.* 21: "*quamvis ipse* [*Claudius*] *in historiis suis prodat intermissos eos* [*Saeculares*] *Augustum multo post, diligentissime annorum ratione subducta, in ordinem redegisse.*"

[70] Suet. *l. c.*

[71] Suet. *Claud.* 16.

[72] Cf. Dio LX, 11, 6-7; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 11, 2; Sen. *Con. ad Pol.* 12, 3; Suet. *Claud.* 18; Dio LX, 26, 1-5; Joan. Mal. *Chron.* 246, 11-19.

and lack of sense of proportion, not to mention his interest in things scientific[73] and a fondness for displaying his knowledge.[74]

One of the most remarkable of Claudius's edicts must have been the one in which he made excuse publicly for his exhibitions of temper and resentment, proceeded in pedantic fashion to draw a careful distinction between the meaning of the two words *iracundia* and *ira,* and then promised that his wrath would be short and harmless and his resentment not without cause.[75] Aside from the naïveté and lack of dignity displayed in the publication of this edict, there are evident in it also the pathetic sensitiveness and self-consciousness to which attention has already been called.

In fact, it was this same sensitiveness and self-consciousness that led him to speak publicly even of his alleged stupidity. This, he declared in certain brief speeches, he had purposely feigned under Gaius, because otherwise he could not have escaped alive and attained his present station.[76]

Scattered examples have already been given in this chapter of Claudius's outbursts of temper and of his undignified exhibitions of resentment. His irritability, however, seems to have been offset at times by the greatest amount of patience and by a ready willingness and even eagerness to apologize. While he is reported to have repulsed with his own hand men who approached him in public at unreasonable times, on other occasions he seems to have borne without resentment not only the taking of liberties, but actual

[73] Suet. *Claud.* 3 and 40; Tac. *Ann.* VI, 46, 2; XIII, 3, 1; Dio LX, 26, 1-5; Plin. *N. H.,* V, 63; VI, 27; 31; 128; VII, 35; 74; 159; IX, 14-15; X, 5; XII, 78; XIII, 79-80; XXXIII, 54; Lydus, *De Mens.* 4, 104; and perhaps Suet. *Claud.* 34: "*cum par quoddam mutuis ictibus concidisset, cultellos sibi parvulos ex utroque ferro in usum fieri sine mora iussit.*" On last example, see Chap. VII, n. 79.

[74] Cf., for instance, Dio LX, 3, 5; 23, 2-3; 26, 1-5; Suet. *Claud.* 42, where he is shown to have paraded his knowledge of Greek; *Oratio Claudii, C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, 1668, ll. 8-26. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 24.

[75] Suet. *Claud.* 38.

[76] Suet. *l. c.*

insult and abuse. "After sharply rebuking the people of Ostia because they had sent no small boats to meet him as he entered the Tiber,"—possibly on his return from the expedition to Britain,—" and in such bitter terms that he wrote that they had reduced him to the rank of a private citizen, he suddenly forgave them and all but apologized."[77] It would seem from this and our other examples that Claudius's irritability was not that of an individual who was habitually disagreeable, but of a man who was highstrung and sensitive, conscious of his weakness, and accordingly quick to take offense when he thought offense was meant.

At the gladiatorial shows in particular, amid the great crowds, excited by the combats and the bloodshed, Claudius seems to have cast utterly to the winds the dignity which even on such occasions his position demanded. According to Suetonius,[78] "there was no form of entertainment at which he was more familiar and free, even thrusting out his left hand, as the commons did, and counting aloud on his fingers the gold pieces which were paid to the victors; and frequently he would stir up the audience, inviting and urging them to be merry, addressing them from time to time as 'my masters,' and interspersing feeble and far-fetched jokes. For example, when the people called for a gladiator named Dove, he promised that they should have him if he could be caught. But the following was both exceedingly worth while and timely: when he had granted the wooden sword,"—the symbol of discharge,—" to an *essedarius* for whose discharge four sons begged, and the act was received with loud and general applause, he at once circulated a note pointing out to the people how greatly they ought to desire children, since they saw that they brought favor and protection even to a gladiator."

On one occasion Claudius's attempt at a little joke caused him to make a sorry exhibition of himself. At the formal

[77] Suet. *Claud.* 15 and 38.
[78] Suet. *Claud.* 21.

opening of the channel that was to drain Lake Fucinus, he had planned a great sham seat-fight. He himself in a superb military cloak and Agrippina in a gold-embroidered mantle presided. An enormous crowd was in attendance. As the fight was to begin the combatants, who were condemned criminals, cried out, probably in the words of a stereotyped formula, "Hail, Emperor, they who are about to die salute thee." But when Claudius replied to this with the words, "Or, rather, not," probably intended as a half-humorous reference to the fact that it was, after all, only a sham battle, they all refused to fight, maintaining that by these words he had pardoned them. At this Claudius did not know what to do. "He hesitated for a while," says Suetonius,[79] "as to whether he ought to destroy them all with fire and sword; but finally he leapt from his seat, and running along the edge of the lake with his ridiculous, unsteady gait, induced them to fight, partly by threats and partly by promises."

In his fright, despair, and general confusion at the time of the conspiracy of Messalina and Silius, already referred to,[80] Claudius is reported to have made an undignified speech to the praetorians, with whom he had taken refuge, declaring that inasmuch as his marriages turned out badly, he would thenceforth remain unmarried; and he confirmed his resolution with an oath, saying that if he did not keep his word, they might stab him to death.[81] On one occasion also toward the end of his life, when the freedmen were praising him for a decision by which on the day before he had condemned a woman for adultery, with his characteristic whimsicality he was prompted to remark that it had been his destiny to have wives who were all unchaste, but not unpunished.[82]

[79] See Suet. *Claud. l. c.;* Tac. *Ann.* XII, 56; Dio LX, 33, 3.

[80] Chaps. II and III.

[81] Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[82] Suet. *Claud.* 43: "*sibi quoque in fatis esse iactavit omnia impudica, sed non impunita matrimonia.*" There is also the suggestion of a pun on *impudica* and *impunita,* if these were the actual words used by Claudius. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XII, 64, 4, where approximately the same remark is said to have been made by Claudius when drunk.

Suetonius,[83] Tacitus,[84] and Plutarch[85] all tell a remarkable story indicating that Claudius possessed a certain grim humor and could also forget the courtesy which he owed to guests in his own house. One day Titus Vinius, afterwards a great friend of the emperor Galba[86] and in fact consul in the year 69,[87] was a guest of Claudius's at dinner and was suspected of having taken the opportunity to steal a golden goblet. The matter was reported to Claudius, who thereupon had him invited again the next day, but gave orders to the servants that he should be served in nothing but earthenware. Thus cleverly was a well-deserved rebuke administered, but in a way hardly befitting the dignity or the courtesy of an emperor.

The last incident that I shall relate as illustrating Claudius's *inconsiderantia* on public occasions, is one that occurred probably in his early manhood. On the occasion of his first reading of part of his history to a large audience, "he had difficulty in finishing," says Suetonius,[88] "since he more than once threw cold water on his own performance. For at the beginning of the reading the breaking down of several benches by a fat man raised a laugh, and even after the disturbance was quieted, Claudius could not keep from recalling the incident and renewing his guffaws." However much we may sympathize with Claudius, who was also perhaps unusually nervous and excitable at this his first reading in public, the incident was doubtless taken at the time as showing an unpardonable lack of dignity and self-control on his part.

It has been shown that while it is quite possible that Claudius was guilty at times of forgetfulness, or pure absentmindedness, the charge as made by Suetonius is certainly not

[83] Suet. *Claud.* 32.
[84] Tac. *Hist.* I, 48.
[85] Plut. *Galba* 12.
[86] Tac. and Plut. *l. c.*
[87] See *C. I. L.* VI, 155; 1986; 2051; X, 6637.
[88] Suet. *Claud.* 41. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 30: "*risus indecens.*"

proved by the examples which he adduces in support of it. However, the numerous instances of *inconsiderantia,* culled from our various authorities, are illuminating and convincing. They show quite conclusively that Claudius was oftentimes lacking in dignity and self-control, in common sense, in the sense of the fitness of things and the sense of proportion; that he was naïve, whimsical, inconsistent, impulsive, irritable, emotional, and excitable; and that he possessed a sense of humor, excepting perhaps in matters that concerned himself, but carried it to excess.

We have here, grouped under the head of *inconsiderantia,* or the more general μετεωρία, seemingly diversified faults of character and conduct. Suetonius himself appears to have been troubled as to how to account for them, and while he of course attempts no scientific explanation, he happens to suggest what I believe to be in the main the primary cause by stating what appeared to the ordinary observer to be the state of Claudius's mind in these fits of *inconsiderantia,* or flightiness. "Indeed," says Suetonius,[89] "he often showed such heedlessness in word and act that one would suppose that he did not know or take time to reflect either who[90] he was, or among whom, when, or where he was speaking." What is here described as his apparent state of mind I believe to have been approximately his actual condition in certain circumstances. While it may be argued that this *inconsiderantia* was largely a matter of lack of early training, of habit developed early in life, of his sensitiveness and self-consciousness,—and these considerations do undoubtedly enter in,—I am inclined to believe that we should accept as the main cause, or at least as a most important contributing cause, a certain nervous tension and excitability which caused Claudius to be affected strongly by the whim

[89] Suet. *Claud.* 40.

[90] I have taken *quis* as the nominative singular rather than the dative plural; for the latter interpretation would appear to make superfluous the *inter quos* which follows, while the former makes the statement far more complete.

and impulse of the moment and to lose at times even in ordinary circumstances his mental balance and whatever sense of perspective he may have had. I believe with Rydberg[91] that his sins against court etiquette, good breeding, dignity, and common sense were due to the same nervous irritability which made him such a slave to the overpowering influence of the moment, whether it were that of woman's charms, or fear, or the sight of suffering or bloodshed.

[91] Rydberg, p. 72.

CHAPTER V

Cruelty

Suetonius[1] characterizes Claudius as cruel and bloodthirsty by nature, and proceeds to support the charge by a series of incidents which make indeed a powerful indictment. This characteristic it is difficult to reconcile with Claudius's well-known clemency and kind-heartedness,[2] but the way out of the difficulty is implicitly suggested by Suetonius himself. It is to be noted that all the incidents which he adduces to support his charge, even if they are to be interpreted as he interprets them, point rather to a morbid curiosity and pleasure in witnessing suffering, and chiefly suffering which Claudius probably looked upon as destined to take place anyway and which he himself had small part in bringing about. He liked to witness the process of extracting evidence by torture, to see the parricide sewed up in his sack; and on one occasion, rather from the point of view of the scientist or antiquarian, he was interested in watching the execution of several condemned criminals in the old-fashioned way.

The other examples of Suetonius refer to Claudius's fondness for gladiatorial shows, in which a certain morbid intensity and nervous excitability, in addition to his morbid pleasure in witnessing suffering, appear to have led him to acts of cruelty for which he was probably at the time hardly responsible. He gave orders that even those gladiators who fell accidentally should be slain, particularly the net-fighters; for as the latter did not wear helmets, he could watch their faces as they died. He derived such pleasure from the combats with wild beasts, which took place early in the morning,

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 34. Cf. Dio LX, 13, 1-4.

[2] See Chap. VI.

and from the so-called midday combats, that he used to go down to the arena at daybreak, and after dismissing the people for luncheon at noon, he would keep his seat and in addition to the appointed combatants would match for trivial and hasty reasons even some of the carpenters, their assistants, and men of that class, if any automatic device or something of the kind had not worked well. Probably in a fit of temper and general excitement, he even forced one of his pages to enter the arena just as he was, in his toga. On one occasion, when a pair of gladiators had fallen by mutually inflicted wounds, he at once had some little knives made from both their swords for his use.[3] Perhaps should be added here an incident already related [4] by way of illustrating Claudius's hasty and inconsiderate decisions at times: "On a man's being convicted of forgery, someone cried out that his hands ought to be cut off; whereupon Claudius insisted that an executioner be summoned at once with knife and block."

This is the extent of Suetonius's evidence. There are no wild orgies of deliberate, diabolical cruelty such as he describes in the cases of Caligula,[5] Nero,[6] or Domitian;[7] there is no mention of the cold, calculating cruelty of which Tiberius,[8] Livia,[9] the younger Agrippina,[10] and even Augustus,[11] in his younger years, were guilty, nor of the vengeful cruelty of a Messalina.[12] When Suetonius does speak of the executions taking place in Claudius's reign it is in the chap-

[3] But see Chap. VII, n. 79.

[4] See Chap. IV, n. 25.

[5] Suet. *Calig.* 23; 26-33; 35; 48; 49.

[6] Suet. *Nero* 26; 33-38.

[7] Suet. *Dom.* 3; 10-11.

[8] Suet. *Tib.* 22; 53; 57-62. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* III-VI, *passim.*

[9] Suet. *Tib.* 22; Tac. *Ann.* I, 3, 3; 10, 4; II, 43, 5; 78, 6; 82, 2.

[10] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 22, 1-4; 59, 1; 64, 4; 65, 2; 66, 2; 67, 2; XIII, 1, 1. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 44; Dio LX, 32-34.

[11] Suet. *Aug.* 10; 11; 13; 15; 27. Sen. *De Clem.* I, 9-11.

[12] Dio LX, 8, 5; 14, 1-4; 15, 5-6; 18; 27, 4; 29, 4-6; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 1-4; Suet. *Claud.* 37; *Nero* 6.

ter in which he describes the emperor's subservience to his wives and freedmen, and the blame is imputed to them rather than to Claudius.[13]

In this our authorities concur rather remarkably. Dio[14] writes that after Claudius had become accustomed in the gladiatorial combats to feast to his heart's content on blood and slaughter, he became more prone to other kinds of murder, meaning the execution of men of note for political reasons; but he makes haste to qualify his statement by adding that for these murders the freedmen and Messalina were responsible.

Tacitus in no place makes a direct charge of cruelty, except when he speaks of Claudius's being goaded on by Agrippina[15] to acts of cruelty. In telling of the trial of the informer Suillius in 58 A. D., he states that the witnesses against the defendant laid at his door the condemnation of a host of Roman knights, and indeed all the cruelty of Claudius, and that when Suillius pleaded that he had only obeyed the orders of the emperor, Nero put a stop to this line of excuse by asserting that he had ascertained from Claudius's papers that that emperor had never forced, or insisted upon, a single prosecution.[16]

It is noteworthy that in the most striking[17] of the several passages in the *Apocolocyntosis* in which Claudius's cruelty is satirized, it is very clearly implied that Claudius had not been himself the active instigator of the many executions carried out in his name. In answer to the question of Augustus as to why he had condemned, before he understood their case or even listened to them, the men and women whom he put to death, Claudius is represented as saying simply, "I didn't know";[18] to which Augustus replies, "So much the

[13] Suet. *Claud.* 29.

[14] Dio LX, 14, 1. Cf. 15, 4-6; 18, 2; 28, 2.

[15] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 59, 1.

[16] Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 43, 1-4. But cf. Suet. *Nero* 33.

[17] Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 3-11, 2; esp. 10, 4-11, 1.

[18] I have adopted Buecheler's emendation *nescii* for *nescio* of the text. This seems to accord better with Augustus's retort.

more disgraceful is it that you didn't know than that you killed them."

Aurelius Victor[19] very definitely implies that all of Claudius's apparent tyranny was due to his wives and freedmen, and Ausonius[20] reproaches him not for what he did, but for what he allowed them to do. Eutropius[21] writes that Claudius was guilty of some cruelty; but it is interesting to note that in the passage in which he compares Domitian to Nero, Caligula and Tiberius he does not include Claudius.[22] Orosius,[23] evidently briefly summarizing Suetonius, *Claud.* 29, writes simply that Claudius put to death thirty-five senators and three hundred knights for very slight reasons; but elsewhere[24] he testifies to Claudius's extraordinary clemency.

This general testimony on the part of our ancient authorities is borne out by an examination of the more than thirty cases of executions specifically cited for which Claudius is held responsible. They may be classified as follows: First, executions of conspirators, ordered by Claudius himself; second, executions of parricides, slaves and freedmen who had been convicted of conspiracy against their masters, or of blackmail and perjury, these executions ordered by Claudius himself; third, executions by the order of Claudius, but instigated by his wives, freedmen, or close advisers; fourth, executions carried out by order of his wives, freedmen, or officials of some kind, without the previous knowledge of Claudius.

To the first class belong Chaerea, Lupus, and others of the conspirators against Caligula, whom Claudius put to death both to make an example of them and because he knew that they had also demanded his own death.[25] However, he

[19] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 5.
[20] Aus. *Caes. Tetr.* V, 3-4.
[21] Eutrop. *Brev.* 7, 13, 1.
[22] Eutrop. *Brev.* 7, 23, 1.
[23] Oros. *Ad. Pag.* VII, 6, 18.
[24] Oros. *Ad. Pag.* VII, 6, 4.
[25] Suet. *Claud.* 11; Dio LX, 3, 4; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 254-259; 268-269. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* I, 44, end.

deliberately and carefully avoided the very real danger of a reign of terror at this time, and abstained from what would probably have been considered the justifiable execution of many who had spoken or acted in opposition to him and his accession.[26]

To this class belong also those who were executed on the ground of being participants in the conspiracies of Vinicianus and Camillus[27] and of Messalina and Silius.[28] In the former of these conspiracies we are told that many senators and knights joined, and doubtless at this time occurred the execution or suicide of a great number of the thirty-five senators and more than three hundred knights said to have been executed during Claudius's reign.[29] According to Dio,[30] many men and many women were put to death or committed suicide, and among them are specifically mentioned in our ancient authorities Vinicianus,[31] Camillus,[32] Caecina Paetus,[33] Quintus Pomponius,[34] and a praetor[35] whose name is not given, all of senatorial rank. However, Claudius appears to have tempered his severity by granting immunity to the children of the guilty conspirators and by allowing some of them even to retain their fathers' property.[36]

Among those put to death as a consequence of the Messalina-Silian conspiracy may be mentioned Caius Silius himself and Juncus Vergilianus, of senatorial rank, the knights Titius Proculus, Vettius Valens, Pompeius Urbicus, Saufeius Trogus, and Traulus Montanus, Decrius Calpurn-

[26] Suet. *Claud.* 11; Dio LX, 3, 5; 4, 5; Oros. *Ad. Pag.* VII, 6, 3-4.
[27] See Suet. *Claud.* 13 and 35; Dio LX, 15.
[28] See Tac. *Ann.* XI, 25, 8 ff.; Suet. *Claud.* 26; Dio LX, 31.
[29] Suet. *Claud.* 29; Sen. *Apocol.* 14, 1.
[30] Dio LX, 15, 5.
[31] Dio *l. c.*
[32] Tac. *Hist.* II, 75, 3; Plin. *Ep.* III, 16, 7-9; Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 4, 4.
[33] Dio LX, 16, 6; Plin. *Ep.* III, 16, 7-9.
[34] Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 43, 3.
[35] Dio LX, 15, 4.
[36] Dio LX, 16, 2.

ianus, the commander of the watch, Sulpicius Rufus, the manager of a gladiatorial show, and Mnester, the pantomimus.[37] The latter and possibly the youthful Montanus it appears that Claudius was disposed to spare on the plea that their familiarity with Messalina had been enforced upon them; but they too were finally sacrificed at the earnest persuasion of the freedmen.[38] However, he spared the lives of two of the Messalina circle, Suillius Caesoninus, one of the sons of the famous informer, Publius Suillius, and Plautius Lateranus, a nephew of A. Plautius Silvanus, who had commanded Claudius's British expedition.[39]

The second class includes those condemned and punished for deeds which appear to have been particularly abhorrent to Claudius. The repetition of such deeds he evidently sought to prevent by making an example of those found guilty of them. The emperor's own peculiar position and his dependence upon his freedmen[40] made him particularly sensitive to anything like disloyalty of slaves and freedmen; and, in fact, he himself had had a taste of such disloyalty when, during the reign of Caligula, his own slave Polydeuces had laid a charge against him.[41] It is therefore not unnatural to find him committing to public death in the arena the majority of the slaves and freedmen who in the reigns of Tiberius and Caligula had conspired or borne false witness against their masters or had extorted blackmail.[42]

Claudius appears to have had a similar antipathy to the crime of parricide. Whether the number of occurrences of

[37] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 35, 4-36, 4.

[38] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 36, 1-4.

[39] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 36, 5.

[40] See esp. Chap. VI.

[41] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 13. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 9: "*deinde extraneo vel etiam domesticorum aliquo deferente assidue varieque inquietatus* [*Claudius*]."

[42] Dio LX, 13, 2. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 14: "*in maiore fraude convictos legitimam poenam supergressus ad bestias condemnavit.*" Cf. also Suet. *Claud.* 25.

this crime had increased in his time we do not know, but Claudius evidently believed in making as horrible examples as possible of those convicted of it. Accordingly, he revived the old method of punishment, by which the criminal was flogged, sewed up in a sack together with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and then thrown into the sea.[43] According to Seneca,[44]—who evidently wishes to give the impression that the severity of the punishment led to an increase rather than a decrease in the number of such crimes,—Claudius sewed up more parricides in sacks during five years than were heard of in all previous centuries.

Perhaps I should mention in connection with this second class the case of one Sabinus, who appears to have been governor of Gaul in the reign of Caligula. It is related by Dio,[45] who alone mentions him, that Claudius and all the people were anxious to put him to death by forcing him to enter a gladiatorial combat, but that he was saved by the interposition of Messalina, whose paramour he was. What was the reason for the desire of such punishment on the part of Claudius and the people is not known. It could hardly have been the relations of Sabinus with the empress, for if they were publicly known at the time and punishment for them was being publicly demanded, it is not likely either that Messalina would have attempted to rescue her favorite or that her entreaties would have been heeded. Lehmann[46] suggests that Sabinus had been the willing tool of Caligula and thus gained popular odium.

The third class of executions includes at least eight and perhaps many more men and women of prominence. Appius Silanus, Messalina's stepfather, was put to death by Claudius, as has already been related,[47] after Messalina and Narcissus had frightened the emperor into believing that Silanus

[43] See *Dig.* 48, 9, 9.
[44] Sen. *De Clem.* I, 23, 1.
[45] Dio LX, 28, 2.
[46] Lehmann, p. 263.
[47] Chap. III.

had plotted his assassination. Julia Livilla, the daughter of Claudius's brother Germanicus, was banished and later put to death on a charge of adultery with Seneca preferred by Messalina, who feared Julia's influence over Claudius.[48] Another Julia, the daughter of Drusus, the son of Tiberius, and wife of Nero, the son of Germanicus, was sacrificed to Messalina's jealousy, though the nature of the accusation is not known.[49]

Gnaeus Pompey, the husband of Claudius's daughter Antonia, appears to have been put to death at the instigation of Messalina, who seems to have feared him or his possible children as rivals of her son Britannicus. The brief description of his death given by Suetonius[50] suggests assassination carefully planned to take place at a time and under circumstances that would seem to make it justifiable. Perhaps this case should more properly belong in the fourth class.

It may be inferred from Dio[51] that after the conspiracy of Vinicianus and Camillus many who were not guilty of participation in the conspiracy were nevertheless executed at the instigation of Messalina and the freedmen, who seized this opportunity to get rid of those who were objectionable to them.

The famous trial and condemnation of Valerius Asiaticus, an ex-consul and a very wealthy man, are also to be attributed to Messalina.[52] To her vengeance at this time two knights of the name of Petra fell victims.[53] It appears that they had lent their house for the rendezvous of Mnester, Messalina's favorite, and Poppaea.[54] Messalina through Suillius had them brought to trial before the senate on the charge evidently that their interpretation of a certain dream

[48] See Chap. II, n. 8.
[49] See Chap. II, n. 9.
[50] Suet. *Claud.* 27 and 29. Cf. Dio LX, 29, 6[a]; 30, 6[a]; Tac. *Hist.* I, 48.
[51] Dio LX, 15, 5-6.
[52] See Chap. IV.
[53] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 4, 1-5.
[54] See Chap. IV.

that they had had involved them in a treasonable act against Claudius, and they were put to death.

According to Dio,[55] our only authority in the case of Polybius, it appears that this freedman and literary adviser of Claudius was executed on a slanderous charge preferred by Messalina from some motive unknown to us.

The death of Lucius Junius Silanus Torquatus, who had been betrothed to Claudius's daughter Octavia,[56] may properly be attributed to the machinations of Agrippina,[57] though he voluntarily committed suicide.[58] Even before her marriage with Claudius she had perfected her plans to have Octavia marry her son Domitius,[59] and in order to remove the obstacle of Silanus she caused Vitellius, Claudius's colleague in the censorship, to bring against Silanus a charge of incest with his sister Junia Calvina.[60] As a consequence Vitellius as censor expelled him from the senate, and Claudius canceled the betrothal to Octavia and compelled him to swear himself out of the office of praetor, which he then held.[61] On the day of the marriage of Claudius and Agrippina, Silanus put an end to himself, "whether," as Tacitus puts it, "because he had up to that time cherished a hope of life or that he deliberately chose that day in order to aggravate the feeling against Claudius and Agrippina."[62]

In 52 A. D., Claudius heard and decided the case of the Jews *versus* the Samaritans, whose quarrel with each other had led to open hostilities. The leading men of each side appeared, together with Cumanus, the procurator of Judea, and Celer, a tribune, both of whom had apparently been bribed by the Samaritans to side with them against the Jews.

[55] Dio LX, 31, 2.

[56] Suet. *Claud.* 24 and 27; Dio LX, 5, 7; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 3, 2.

[57] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 4.

[58] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 8, 1. Suetonius (*Claud.* 27) and Dio (LX, 31, 7), probably inaccurately, state that he was put to death by Claudius.

[59] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 3, 2.

[60] See Chap. IV.

[61] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 4, 5.

[62] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 8, 1.

Claudius, deciding against the Samaritans, put to death those of them who had come to Rome to the trial, banished Cumanus, and gave orders for Celer to be taken back to Jerusalem, drawn through the city in the sight of the people, and then executed. The treatment of the Samaritans and the Roman tribune, harsh as it may seem, was doubtless deemed necessary as an example both to impress the Samaritans, who had instigated the trouble, and to placate the Jews, who felt that they had been grievously wronged not only by the Samaritans, but by the corrupted Roman officers. However, even in this case Claudius does not appear to have had full sway or to have arrived at his decision without the play of powerful influences. The freedmen and his friends seem to have favored the Samaritans, and apparently they would have prevailed but for the fact that the younger Agrippa, who was at that time in Rome, succeeded in persuading Agrippina to see that Claudius should be favorably disposed toward the Jews.[63]

To the fourth and last class of executions belong probably not very many cases. Two are specifically recorded. According to Suetonius,[64] Claudius was so careless and gullible in regard to executions that on one occasion, when a centurion in reporting the death of an ex-consul said that the emperor's order had been carried out, he replied that he had given no such order; but nevertheless he approved the act upon representation's being made to him by his freedmen that the soldiers had done their duty in hastening to avenge their emperor even without instructions. The other case is that of the death of Messalina, which Narcissus took into his own hands and in which Claudius afterwards silently acquiesced.[65]

The above consideration of the charge of cruelty and bloodthirstiness against Claudius does not absolve him alto-

[63] Joseph. *Antiq.* XX, 118-136; *B. J.* II, 232-246. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XII, 54, where the story is told rather differently and not in such detail.

[64] Suet. *Claud.* 29.

[65] See Chap. II. Cf. Chap. VI.

gether. Nevertheless, it does limit and define that charge in such a way as to throw a different light on this particular phase of his character. That he should take particular pleasure in gladiatorial combats is not so much an evidence of cruelty as of that peculiar delight of a weakling and a coward in witnessing deeds of strength and valor. Moreover, he enjoyed the crowd and the excitement, and to this excitement, which with him tended to become uncontrollable and to render him more or less irresponsible for the time, were due in large part, I believe, the useless sacrifice of life and the delight in witnessing suffering in which it is reported that he indulged at these games. That he took a morbid pleasure in viewing suffering at other times, when not under the stress of extraordinary excitement, cannot be denied in the face of such testimony as we have; but this pleasure, as already noted in this chapter, appears to have been such as we see today in the case of those who flock to an execution. His well-established tendency to mercy and kind-heartedness [66] prevents us from believing that he enjoyed inflicting suffering; he seems to have taken a semi-scientific interest and a morbid pleasure only in witnessing it.

For the great number of executions during his reign Claudius was of course morally responsible, but it is sufficiently well established that they are not to be taken as indicative of deliberate, cold-hearted cruelty on his part, but rather of his moral weakness and pliability.[67] Many of the executions were ordered by him when in a state of great fright and were afterwards repented of; many were ordered by his wives or freedmen without his knowledge or acquiescence, and were afterwards upheld by him, probably as a matter of policy; and many were justified, at least according to the best thought of his time.

[66] See Chap. VI.

[67] For Claudius's *facilitas* cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 28, 3; XII, 61, 4.

CHAPTER VI

Humanity

In striking contrast with the cruelty and bloodthirstiness charged against Claudius, is the existence of a trait, or combination of traits, which in general may be called his humanity. He seems to have craved and enjoyed human companionship without regard to class, to have had the greatest affection for and loyalty to the members of his family and his friends, to have been generous, kind, considerate and courteous, most grateful for any kindness to himself, magnanimous on the whole, rather than malicious or vindictive, and disposed to clemency and mercy. His countenance was mild and kindly, as we may judge not only from the portrait busts and statues,[1] but also from the description attributed to Augustus in the *Apocolocyntosis*, "He doesn't look as if he could disturb a fly."[2]

Despised and ignored by his family Claudius in his childhood and youth sought and enjoyed the companionship of the freedmen. It will be recalled that in one of his letters to Livia, written when Claudius was somewhere between fourteen or fifteen and twenty-three, Augustus speaks of his efforts to wean him from the influence of his friends Sulpicius and Athenodorus.[3] When condemned by Tiberius to a life of inactivity Claudius seems to have enjoyed the companionship of men of the lowest kind and to have sought conviviality not only in his own home,[4] but also in the taverns of Rome.[5] After he became emperor he frequently gave large dinner parties, to which he invited not only men and

[1] See Chap. I.
[2] Sen. *Apocol.* 10, 3.
[3] See Introd.
[4] Suet. *Claud.* 5.
[5] Suet. *Claud.* 40.

women, but children as well.[6] He was fond of public games and exhibitions of all kinds, especially the gladiatorial shows, at which he enjoyed conducting himself as one of the people. He would often urge the audience to be merry and would laugh and joke with them.[7] While his conduct on such occasions was to a great extent due to nervous excitement, at the same time it is an evidence also of a spirit of sociability and good humor on his part such as we do not find, for instance, in the gloomy and rather ascetic Tiberius. Perhaps I should mention here the passage in the *Apocolocyntosis* in which Claudius is represented, probably characteristically, as greeting so affably and with such evident pleasure the number of old friends whom he finds in Hades.[8]

Claudius's affection for and loyalty to his family and his friends appear to have been very real and very human. His feeling toward Messalina and Agrippina must, for very good reasons,[9] be discounted in this connection, but it should not altogether be ignored. That he was fascinated by Messalina is undoubted. That he was totally ignorant of her misconduct is hardly credible. Dio[10] implies that he knew certainly of Messalina's affair with Mnester, and it is likely that a sense of loyalty to her, if not fear, in addition to his own pride, made him deny publicly that Mnester was at the palace, when the people wanted to know why he no longer danced for them. Even after the Silian conspiracy Claudius appears to have had a return of his old affection and to have given orders that the "poor woman" (*misera*) should appear before him to plead her cause.[11] It was this that Narcissus and the other freedmen had feared, and they prevented the contingency by despatching Messalina on their own authority.[12] Tacitus's statement that after the death of

[6] Suet. *Claud.* 32.
[7] See Chap. IV.
[8] Sen. *Apocol.* 13, 6.
[9] See Chap. II.
[10] Dio LX, 28, 3-5.
[11] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 37, 2.
[12] See Chap. II.

Messalina Claudius "showed no sign of hate, joy, resentment, sorrow, or, in short, of any human feeling,"[13] so far from being condemnatory of him, may well be taken as an evidence either of philosophical resignation or of that deep grief which is all the deeper in its undemonstrativeness.

For Agrippina and Nero, at first, Claudius appears to have had the natural feeling of an uncle for his niece and great-nephew, recalling Agrippina from banishment and restoring to both of them their property.[14] After his marriage to Agrippina and adoption of Nero[15] he seems to have bestowed upon them all the devotion and certainly all the honors that their position called for.[16] It appears that his affection cooled toward the end of his life, but only when he realized that he had neglected the prior claims which his own son Britannicus naturally had on his affections.[17]

Of this son and heir Claudius had evidently been very proud and very fond. Suetonius[18] relates that "when the boy was still very small, his father would often take him in his arms and commend him to the assembled soldiers and to the people at the games, holding him in his lap or in his outstretched hands." When he finally realized how, all unwittingly probably, he had wronged his son through the machinations of Agrippina, he is reported to have embraced him and promised that he would heal his wounds.[19] During that harassing journey from Ostia to Rome, after he had been apprised of the Messalina-Silian conspiracy, Claudius is said to have recurred more than once to the thought of his married life and of his infant children;[20] and Messalina herself, knowing Claudius's tenderness, or weakness, in this direc-

[13] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 38, 3.
[14] Dio LX, 4, 1; Suet. *Nero* 6.
[15] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 25-26; Suet. *Claud.* 27; *Nero* 7; Dio LX, 32-33.
[16] For Agrippina see Tac. *Ann.* XII, 37, 5; 42; 56, 4; Dio LX, 33; Plin. *N. H.* XXXIII, 63. For Nero see Tac. *Ann.* XII, 9, 2; 41; 58; Dio LX, 33.
[17] Suet. *Claud.* 43; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 64, 4; Dio LX, 34, 1.
[18] Suet. *Claud.* 27.
[19] Suet. *Claud.* 43.
[20] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 34, 1.

tion, purposely sent orders that Britannicus and Octavia should hurry to the arms of their father, thus silently to plead for her life.[21] According to Tacitus,[22] when Agrippina and Vitellius brought their serious charge against Silanus, who had been betrothed to Octavia, Claudius's affection for his daughter made him more ready to listen to the charge. To be sure, none of these instances is evidence of any remarkable or unusual affection; but they are sufficient to disprove the fairly common belief that Claudius was incapable of human emotion and sentiment, that "he had neither likes nor dislikes, except such as were instilled and dictated."[23]

Of Claudius's affection and loyalty toward his friends and of his supreme confidence in them there is abundant evidence. It cannot be doubted that, from whatever cause or motive, he was a veritable slave to his principal freedmen, who appear to have been the closest persons to him, certainly after he became emperor.[24] He reposed in them the utmost trust, making them his closest advisers and his most important administrative officers;[25] he took care to support them when their administrative acts were criticised by others;[26] and he lavished upon them hitherto unheard-of honors.[27] In the letter in which Seneca attempts to console the freedman Polybius for the death of a brother, the philosopher expresses the belief that Claudius, in accordance with his great

[21] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 32, 4; 34, 3-4.

[22] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 4, 3.

[23] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 3, 3. Cf. Furneaux, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

[24] Suet. *Claud.* 25; 28; 29; Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 6, 3; Dio LX, 2, 4; 28, 2; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 4, 5; Aus. *Caes. Tetr.* V, 3-4; Sen. *Apocol.* 6, 2; 8, 2; 12, 2; 15, 2; Plin. *N. H.* XII, 12; XXXIII, 134-135; Julian, *Caes.* 310, B-C.

[25] See, for example, Suet. *Claud.* 28; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 33-34; 36, 3; 37, 3; XII, 1-2; 25; 53, 1-2; 57, 4; Plin. *N. H.* XXXIII, 145; Dio LX, 19, 2-3; 33, 3[a], 5, and 6.

[26] Suet. *Claud.* 29; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 38. Cf. Chap. V.

[27] See notes 24 and 25 and cf. esp. Suet. *Claud.* 28; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 53, 4-5; Plin. *Ep.* VII, 29; VIII, 6.

kindness and graciousness toward all his followers, has already laid many healing balms upon his freedman's wound.[28]

One of Claudius's closest and most honored friends was Lucius Vitellius.[29] It is suggested that he gained and maintained the favor of Claudius largely through flattering the emperor's wives and freedmen.[30] However that may be, he undoubtedly possessed that favor and maintained it to the end. When Claudius went away on his expedition to Britain, he left Vitellius in complete charge of the empire, placing him in a position similar to that which had been held at times by Maecenas under Augustus.[31] He made Vitellius his colleague in the censorship and twice in the consulship.[32] In a letter addressed to the Jews in 44 A. D., in which he granted them the right to have in their power the holy vestments and the crown belonging to them, Claudius took occasion to cite as a precedent a similar decision of Vitellius, made doubtless when he was governor of Syria under Tiberius, referring to Vitellius as "ὁ κράτιστος καί μοι τιμιώτατος."[33] It is true that Claudius seems to have been disposed to listen to a charge of treason laid against the old courtier in 51 A. D., but although it is stated that it was because of the threats of Agrippina that he was forced not only to dismiss the charge, but also to banish the accuser, it is quite probable that he was none too willing to believe in the guilt of his old friend.[34]

Another friend of Claudius, and a lifelong friend, was Herodes Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, and the grandson of Herod the Great. Agrippa, of exactly the same age as Claudius, was brought up and educated in the Roman imperial household from the time he was six years

[28] Sen. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 12, 4.
[29] Tac. *Ann.* VI, 32, 7; Suet. *Vit.* 2.
[30] Suet. *l. c.* Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 2-3; 4-6; XII, 4-6, *etc.*
[31] Suet. *l. c.* See Momm. *Staatsr.* II, 3, 1114.
[32] Suet. *l. c.*
[33] Joseph. *Antiq.* XX, 12. Cf. XVIII, 90-95.
[34] See Chap. III.

old with Drusus, Tiberius's son, and Claudius.[35] The latter appears to have been fond of him and to have had confidence in him. At the death of Caligula it was Agrippa whose advice he followed in his attitude toward accepting the imperial power and toward the senate,[36] and during his principate he gave many evidences of his affection and gratitude. Immediately after his accession he published an edict in which he commended Agrippa highly, confirmed him in his sovereignty over the kingdom which Caligula had given him, added all of Judea and Samaria, over which Agrippa's grandfather Herod had ruled, and granted him further, out of his own dominions, Abila of Lysanias and as much of his territory as lay on Mt. Libanus, confirming the transaction by a treaty with Agrippa publicly in the forum.[37] Moreover, at Agrippa's request the kingdom of Chalcis was given to his brother Herodes.[38] At the instance of Agrippa and Herodes he also published two edicts, one sent to Alexandria and the other to Syria, granting to Jews throughout the empire the right to follow their ancient customs without hindrance. In the latter edict Claudius spoke of Agrippa and Herodes as persons very dear to him.[39]

At the news of Agrippa's sudden death in 44 A. D., Claudius was much distressed, and when he had been informed that the citizens of Sebaste and Caesarea had abused and insulted the memory of their dead king despite his kind and generous rule, he was angry, and apparently with the impetuous desire to show at once how he, the Roman emperor, felt toward his departed friend, he was eager to send Agrippa Junior, whom he had been bringing up with him in the palace at Rome, to succeed his father without delay. From this he was dissuaded only by the most influential of his freedmen and friends, who convinced him that the young

[35] Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII, 6, 1 and 4.
[36] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 236-268; *B. J.* II, 206-214.
[37] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 274-275; *B. J.* II, 215-216.
[38] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 277; *B. J.* II, 217.
[39] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 278-291.

Agrippa, then a boy of seventeen, was not old enough to shoulder such a responsibility.[40] However, Claudius gave instructions to Cuspius Fadus, whom he appointed procurator of Judea and the whole of Agrippa's kingdom, to punish the people of Caesarea and Sebaste who had been guilty of the insult to the memory of their king.[41] Moreover, he himself showed such respect to the memory of his old friend that he would not allow Marsus, the governor of Syria, to enter Agrippa's kingdom, and furthermore displaced him in favor of Cassius Longinus;[42] for it appears that Marsus had been officious and overzealous in the discharge of what he thought to be his duties, thereby incurring the displeasure of Agrippa, who had written to the emperor not long before his death requesting the governor's recall.[43]

Among those whom Claudius released from prison at the beginning of his reign was Alexander Lysimachus, the Jewish alabarch of Alexandria, who is spoken of as an old friend of his and a former steward of his mother Antonia.[44] It appears that Lysimachus had been a victim of Caligula's anger, probably at the time when the Jews of Alexandria, among them Lysimachus's brother Philo, incurred the displeasure of the emperor by their refusal to worship as he directed.[45]

Claudius's affection for and loyalty to his old friends led him probably more than once into displaying poor judgment. Certainly his appointment of Julius Paelignus to the procuratorship of Cappadocia proved far from happy. This man, according to Tacitus,[46] "was contemptible alike for his lack of character and his bodily deformity, but was exceedingly intimate with Claudius, since the latter had formerly amused himself during his idle leisure with the society of

[40] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 361-362.
[41] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 365.
[42] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 363 and XX, 1.
[43] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 326-327; 340-342; and XX, 1.
[44] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 276.
[45] Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII, 259.
[46] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 49, 1.

buffoons." Paelignus showed his incompetence chiefly by engaging with mischievous activity in the politics of the east and caused considerable embarrassment to the emperor and his officials.[47]

At the time of the death of Caligula, Galba was in command of the legions in Upper Germany, but rejected the suggestion of those who urged him to take advantage of his opportunity to make himself emperor. Of this Claudius appears to have been highly appreciative. He received him into the group of his intimate friends and considered him worthy of such consideration that the departure of the expedition for Britain was put off until Galba should recover from a slight illness with which he had suddenly been taken.[48]

While it is true that Claudius's motives in many instances may be questioned, there is nevertheless every evidence that he was inclined to be generous and no evidence that he was mean or parsimonious. At the time of his accession he gave a large donation not only to the praetorians and their centurions and tribunes, but also to the legionaries,[49] and on every anniversary of the day thereafter he gave each of the praetorians 25 denarii.[50] He distributed largesses to the populace rather frequently.[51] He exhibited in handsome fashion many shows and spectacles of various kinds.[52] On one occasion he rewarded, apparently from his own purse, citizens who helped the soldiers and his slaves fight a stubborn fire in Rome.[53] We are told by Pliny that he paid annually to his physician Xenophon the generous fee of 500,000 sesterces.[54] To the cities of Crete and to Ephesus, Smyrna, Antioch and many other cities of Asia which had suffered from severe

[47] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 49-51.
[48] Suet. *Gal.* 6-7.
[49] Suet. *Claud.* 10; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 247.
[50] Dio LX, 12, 4.
[51] Suet. *Claud.* 21; Dio LX, 25, 7.
[52] Suet. *l. c.*
[53] Suet. *Claud.* 18.
[54] Plin. *N. H.* XXIX, 8.

earthquake, he appears to have been most generous in their distress, contributing largely to the work of rebuilding.[55]

Claudius was lavish also in the bestowal of honors of various kinds, though his prodigality in this direction was doubtless due in part to the influence of his wives and freedmen exerted in behalf of their favorites. Suetonius[56] devotes a chapter to this subject, and one will find also scattered instances elsewhere in Suetonius and in our other ancient authorities.[57] Claudius seems to have been particularly free in the granting of the triumphal regalia.[58] The story is told by Tacitus,[59] and supported by Suetonius,[60] that after he had conferred this honor upon Corbulo, the legate in Lower Germany, for having employed his soldiers in digging a canal, and at about the same time upon Curtius Rufus, the legate in Upper Germany, for setting his soldiers to work at opening up some silver mines, the soldiers, feeling that they were being worn out by this sort of work without adequate results, drew up an anonymous petition in the name of all the armies, imploring the emperor to grant the triumphal honors beforehand to all generals whom he proposed to put in command of armies. The story is a good one, and even if too good to be true in its details, as has been suspected, it nevertheless would never have been told unless Claudius's prodigality in the granting of triumphal honors had been sufficiently well known to make the story effective.

Evidence of Claudius's kindness in general, or broad spirit of humanity, is found in his democratic attitude and in his political philosophy with reference both to the Roman people[61] and to foreign peoples.[62] Seneca's statement to Poly-

[55] Joan. Mal. *Chron.* 246, 11-19; 250, 1-11.
[56] Suet. *Claud.* 29.
[57] Dio LX, 17. See also notes 24-27.
[58] Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 53, 1.
[59] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 20, 5.
[60] Suet. *Claud.* 24.
[61] Suet. *Claud.* 12; Dio LX, 5, 7; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 11, 2. Cf. Chap. IV, n. 72.
[62] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 24 (cf. *C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, 1668; V, 5050); Tac. *Ann.* XII, 11, 3.

bius, rhetorical and probably insincere, that Claudius was showing in his rule how much better the empire was guarded by deeds of kindness than by deeds of arms,[63] contains after all more than a grain of truth. But there are individual instances showing his human kindness uncomplicated by questions of political theory or expediency. Several of these have already been touched upon in this chapter in connection with his relations to his family and friends; but the most striking is that of his decree with regard to slaves exposed on the island of Aesculapius in the Tiber.

It had been the practice of such masters as wished to avoid the trouble of treating or keeping their sick and outworn slaves to expose them on this island, with the result that they either died there or recovered and returned to their masters. Claudius now decreed that all slaves thus exposed were to be free and that if they should recover, they were not to return to the control of their masters. He furthermore provided that if anyone preferred to kill such a slave rather than abandon him, that man would be liable to the charge of murder.[64]

In his personal relations with senators and knights Claudius was kind, considerate and courteous, being inclined to put himself on a footing with them, visiting them when they were ill and sharing in their festivities.[65] When at the beginning of his reign the senators, deserted by the soldiers, finally flocked to the camp to greet the new emperor, Claudius restrained the violence of the soldiers, who were incensed at the stubborn opposition which the senate had made. He barely rescued the consul, Quintus Pomponius, from assault before his very eyes, having him come and sit beside him;[66] and at the news that others were being attacked outside the camp he in some way persuaded the soldiers to desist.[67]

[63] Sen. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 12, 3.
[64] Suet. *Claud.* 25; Dio LX, 29, 7[2].
[65] Dio LX, 12, 1.
[66] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 263-264.
[67] Joseph. *B. J.* II, 212-214. *Cf. Antiq.* XIX, 264-266.

In the meetings of the senate Claudius himself was in the habit of rising in case the others had been standing for some time,[68] though it was difficult for him to stand.[69] He allowed the aged Lucius Sulla, who was unable to hear anything from his own seat unless he stood up, to sit on the praetor's bench.[70] When on one occasion the consuls came down from their own seats to talk with him, he rose and went to meet them.[71]

Throughout his reign Claudius appears to have had the earnest desire to spare as far as possible the feelings of those who for various reasons were forced to retire from the senate. In A. D. 42 he allowed to resign voluntarily such as were unable for lack of means to remain in the senate,[72] and he appears to have granted the same privilege during his censorship in 47-48.[73] Tacitus[74] states that "the emperor greatly enjoyed exercising the censorian function of admitting new patricians," but was troubled as to how to expel from the senate even men of notoriously evil character, and finally adopted a mild and modern method rather than resort to ancient methods of severity. Such persons he warned to take each his own case into consideration and seek the privilege of giving up his rank voluntarily. "This permission, he promised, would readily be granted, and he said he would mitigate the indignity of the censorian judgment by publishing the names of those expelled in the same list with those whose own modesty led them to retire." The fact that in proportion as the disgrace of those who had been expelled was decreased by the publication of such a list, the disgrace of those who had retired voluntarily was increased, does not seem to have occurred to the emperor, as has already been

[68] Dio LX, 12, 3.
[69] See Chap. I.
[70] Dio LX, 12, 3.
[71] Dio LX, 6, 1.
[72] Dio LX, 11, 8.
[73] Dio LX, 29, 1; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 25-26.
[74] Tac. *l. c.*

pointed out;[75] but this does not detract from the fact that his intentions, at any rate, were most kindly. Later on, in A. D. 52, he again purged the senate of those who lacked sufficient means. According to Tacitus[76] he took occasion to praise in the senate "those senators who voluntarily withdrew from the order on account of poverty, and expelled those who by remaining were adding lack of modesty to lack of means."

The examples already quoted as having been adduced by Suetonius[77] to show Claudius's inconsistency in the administration of the censorship might be recalled here as indicating also his inclination to sympathy and leniency in his review of the knights.

As an illustration of his magnanimity and his courtesy as well, Claudius not only granted the honor of an ovation to Aulus Plautius, who had commanded the Roman forces in the British expedition, but he himself went out to meet him as he entered the city, and walked on his left as he proceeded to the Capitol and returned again.[78] He appears to have been anxious to make amends for his outbursts of temper, apologizing on more than one occasion. Indeed, at other times he seems to have been most patient and good-natured. Suetonius records that he himself used to hear older men say that the pleaders took such advantage of Claudius's patience, or good nature (*patientia*), that they would not only call him back when he was leaving the tribunal, but would catch hold of the fringe of his robe and sometimes of his foot and thus detain him. At times he seems to have borne without resentment not only the taking of liberties, but actual insult and abuse.[79]

[75] Chap. IV.
[76] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 52, 4.
[77] Chap. IV, n. 40.
[78] Suet. *Claud.* 24; Eutrop. *Brev.* 7, 13. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 32; Dio LX, 30, 2.
[79] See Chap. IV, n. 77.

When Claudius was in Naples bringing out a Greek comedy of his brother Germanicus, he took care to conduct himself as a private citizen, and he and his companions lived and dressed in Greek fashion.[80] It is possible, however, to take this last instance as an example rather of his pedantry and fondness for things Greek[81] than of his courtesy.

Himself kindly disposed, yet not always treated with kindness, Claudius appears to have been grateful for any kindness shown to him. His appreciation of the services of Herodes Agrippa and Galba has just been touched upon. He received into the court circle and made one of his secretaries and most powerful advisers Callistus, a freedman of Caligula who had convinced him that he had saved him from death at the hands of Caligula.[82] On one occasion he gave as one of his reasons for supporting a certain man for the quaestorship the fact that the man's father had given him a cup of cold water once when he was ill and needed it; and at another time, when a woman was brought before the senate as a witness, he said, "This woman was my mother's freedwoman and maid, but she always regarded me as her patron; I have mentioned this because there are still some in my household who do not so regard me."[83] He appears also to have abhorred the idea of ungratefulness. When he had been carried off to the camp after the death of Caligula and the senate demanded that he renounce the throne, he replied,—how sincerely is of course a matter for dispute,—that he could not bear the thought of betraying the soldiers who had sworn allegiance to him and that he would fight rather than do so.[84] His anger at the disrespect accorded the memory of Agrippa by the citizens of Sebaste and Caesarea, already referred to in this chapter, was evidently

[80] Dio LX, 6, 2. Cf. Smilda, p. 52, note on *Neapolitano certamine.*

[81] Cf., for instance, Suet. *Claud.* 42.

[82] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 64-68; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 29, 1-2; XII, 1-2; Dio LX, 30, 6[b]; Plin. *N. H.* XXXVI, 60.

[83] Suet. *Claud.* 40.

[84] Joseph. *B. J.* II, 207 and 209.

aroused not only by his affection for the dead king, but also by his resentment at the ungratefulness which they had thereby shown. To such an extent did he carry his resentment in the case of slaves or freedmen who proved ungrateful and disloyal that he punished them with unusual severity, if not positive cruelty, though it is true that he himself had more than an abstract or impersonal interest in such punishments.[85]

Claudius must be credited also with a considerable degree of magnanimity, though this is offset or at least discounted by the fact that he gave way at times to a spirit of vindictiveness, or petty meanness. In spite of the treatment he had received at the hands of Livia and Antonia,[86] he took care to honor their memory publicly,[87] even procuring the deification of Livia. To Tiberius and Caligula also, for whom neither he nor the Roman people could have had any real affection, he showed a certain amount of respect. He completed the marble arch to Tiberius near Pompey's theatre, which had been voted some time before by the senate, but not finished;[88] and he had the name of Tiberius inscribed on the stage-building of Pompey's theatre, because it was that emperor who had rebuilt the structure after it was burned.[89] He also restored the holidays of Tiberius's birthday and of the anniversary of his victory over the Illyrians, which had been abolished by Caligula;[90] and this too in the face of the fact that he put an end to many sacrifices and feast-days on the ground that their number was seriously interfering with public business.[91]

[85] See Chap. V. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 25; Dio LX, 28, 1; Marcianus, *Dig.* 37, 14, 5.

[86] Suet. *Claud.* 3.

[87] Suet. *Claud.* 11; Dio LX, 5, 1-2.

[88] Suet. *l. c.*

[89] Dio LX, 6, 8.

[90] See Lehmann, p. 128.

[91] Dio LX, 17, 1.

Even in the case of Caligula, while he annulled his acts [92] and on his own responsibility caused all his images to disappear quietly by night,[93] nevertheless, when the senate manifested a desire to dishonor Caligula by adding to the festivals the day of his death and of Claudius's accession, the latter personally prevented such a decree.[94] The senate did not of course decree the deification of Caligula, and therefore, as in the case of Tiberius, his name was not used in oaths and prayers;[95] but it appears that no attempt was made to obliterate his memory entirely, for on coins of the senate of this period the elder Agrippina is designated as the "Mother of Caius Cæsar," and on one silver coin we find the head of Claudius on one side and that of Caligula on the other.[96] However, in the *Apocolocyntosis* Augustus is represented as saying that Claudius had "never ceased persecuting the memory of Caius Cæsar."[97] For this statement, evidently exaggerated, if we may judge from the evidence just presented, the undoing of the acts of Caligula may be the basis; but it is also true, as we have seen,[98] that in the edict to the Alexandrian Jews, promulgated at the beginning of his reign, Claudius spoke of the want of understanding and the insanity of Caligula, and likewise in the Anaunian Edict criticised both Tiberius and Caligula for not having attended closely to business and referred by implication, at least, to their uncertain temper.

Certainly toward those who had openly shown their eagerness for a democracy or had been regarded as eligible for the supreme power, Claudius manifested the utmost magnanimity. So far from bearing them malice, he actually gave them honors and offices.[99] He considered it of foremost im-

[92] Suet. *l. c.;* Dio LX, 4, 1.
[93] Dio LX, 4, 5.
[94] Dio *l. c.;* Suet. *l. c.*
[95] Dio LX, 4, 6.
[96] See Lehmann, *l. c.*
[97] Sen. *Apocol.* 11, 2.
[98] Chap. IV.
[99] Dio LX, 3, 5.

portance to obliterate the memory of the two days when men had thought of changing the form of government, and accordingly he made a decree that all that had been done and said during that period should be pardoned and forever forgotten,—therein imitating the example of the Athenians, as he himself used to say.[100] He kept his word, too, excepting in the case of a few of those who were directly implicated in the murder of Caligula; and these he put to death rather to make an example of them.[101] He abolished complaints of *maiestas* alike for things written and things done and punished no one on any such charge for either earlier or later offenses.[102] In 43 A. D. he confirmed his decision in this regard. It appears that informers were beginning to lay charges against persons who did not use Claudius's proper title or had failed to include him in their wills, when he interfered and forbade anyone's being called to account for such negligence.[103]

As Claudius appears to have remembered those who had been kind to him, so does he seem never to have forgotten those who had injured him. Though Dio says that he took no steps after he became emperor to invent a charge on which he might prosecute those who had injured or insulted him when a private citizen, he qualifies his statement by adding that if, however, he found these men guilty of some other crime, he took advantage of his opportunity to punish them also for their abuse of him.[104] Moreover, it appears from a passage of Suetonius, in which he is speaking of Claudius's harboring resentments, that at least two offenders were openly punished on the ground of what they had done to him.

[100] Dio *l. c.;* Suet. *l. c.;* Oros. *Ad. Pag.* VII, 6, 3-4. Cf. Dio XLIV, 26.

[101] Suet. *l. c.;* Dio LX, 3, 4; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 268 ff.

[102] Dio LX, 3, 6.

[103] Dio LX, 17, 7.

[104] Dio LX, 3, 7.

It is stated that "he banished without a hearing a quaestor's clerk and a senator of praetorian rank, although they were blameless; the former on the ground that he had gone too far in pleading, or testifying, against him when he was a private citizen, and the latter on the ground that as aedile he had fined the tenants of Claudius's estates for violating the law forbidding the selling of cooked victuals, and had whipped his bailiff when he remonstrated."[105] It is of course quite possible to reconcile these two incidents with Dio's statement, by supposing that Suetonius has not been entirely accurate, that the two men were brought to trial really on other charges, and thus were exposed to the emperor's vengeance. However, it is certainly not necessary to believe that Claudius was entirely consistent in this respect and that his resentment did not at times get the better of his judgment or of his nobler tendencies.

Claudius's freedom from jealousy, sincere appreciation of services rendered, and liberality to those who were associated with him in the work of the empire have already been touched upon, and serve as further indication of his large-mindedness. The only incident to mar his record in this respect is that of his placing a check upon Corbulo in 47 A. D., in the latter's operations against the Germans; and even in this incident timidity, rather than jealousy, may well have been the moving cause. As legate in Lower Germany Corbulo had been eminently successful, driving out of the province the Chauci, who had attempted an invasion, restoring the old discipline and efficiency among the troops, and settling amicably the long-standing trouble with the Frisians.[106] When, however, through aggressive action on his part, a war with the Chauci was again in prospect and Corbulo was already pitching camp in the enemy's country, his course aroused opposition at Rome. His critics asked why he should provoke the enemy, and they declared that it was

[105] Suet. *Claud.* 38.
[106] See Tac. *Ann.* XI, 18-19, 2.

upon the state that the burden would fall if he was unsuccessful; whereas if he should be successful, his preëminence and the fact that he would consequently be intolerable to a prince who was none too strong anyway, would be likely to endanger the public peace.[107] This thought,—doubtless with omission of the reference to the emperor's weakness,—seems to have been suggested to Claudius by his friends and advisers; for according to Tacitus, "Claudius *therefore* not only forbade any fresh attack upon Germany, but went so far as to order the garrisons to be withdrawn behind the Rhine,"[108] thus evacuating what had already been won.

While it may be inferred that Tacitus here suggests jealousy[109] on the part of Claudius, it was certainly not petty jealousy, for the emperor granted Corbulo the triumphal insignia, apparently left him in command of his army, and made no attempt to degrade him in any way.[110] Moreover, it is quite reasonable to believe that he had very good reasons to be timid, or prudent. As had been demonstrated before in Roman history and was to be demonstrated shortly after, the armies constituted a potential menace to the stability of the throne, the more so if their leader was allowed to become too successful and too popular. In addition, as Mommsen[111] suggests, it must not be forgotten that at this time a large force was still required in the newly-conquered Britain, and it is probable that this fact necessitated an unambitious policy in Germany.

Despite Suetonius's statement to the contrary,[112] it appears that Claudius's disposition, or natural impulse, was to clemency and mercy rather than to cruelty and bloodthirstiness. In his letter to the emperor's freedman Polybius, written probably in the year 44,[113] Seneca places Claudius's clemency

[107] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 19, 3-20, 1. Cf. Dio LX, 30, 4-6.
[108] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 19, 7.
[109] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 20, 1. Cf. Dio *l. c.*
[110] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 20, 2-3; Dio *l. c.*
[111] Momm. *Röm. Gesch.* V, 115.
[112] See Chap. V, n. 1.
[113] See Lehmann, pp. 10 and 233-235.

as the first of his virtues,[114] speaks more than once of his pity,[115] and several times characterizes him as *mitis* or *mitissimus*.[116] However seriously we may be willing to take these statements of Seneca, it is a matter of record that certainly at the very outset, as we have just seen, Claudius did show remarkable clemency, and evidences of it are at least fairly frequent throughout his reign. Several instances have already been treated in another connection, and to them the following may be added.

Dio[117] testifies to Claudius's customary grief and penitence after he had recovered from a fit of terror in which he had ordered the execution of anyone. Seneca[118] himself tells of Claudius's clemency in his case, how the emperor pleaded in the senate for his life and thus alleviated the punishment which he might otherwise have received. Even in the case of those connected with the rebellion of Vinicianus and Camillus, Claudius appears to have tempered his severity by granting immunity to the children of the guilty conspirators and allowing some of them to retain their fathers' property.[119] When a tribune beat a slave of Claudius's in public, which might well have been counted a serious insult to the emperor himself, he reproved the offender only by depriving him of his assistants, and these he restored not long afterward.[120]

Of the conspiracy of Asinius Gallus and Statilius Corvinus in 46 A. D., in which Suetonius[121] says that several of the emperor's freedmen and slaves joined, we know no details, excepting that Gallus was not put to death, but merely banished. According to Dio,[122] " the reason perhaps was that

[114] Sen. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 13, 2.
[115] Cf. Sen. *ibid.* 6, 5; 13, 3.
[116] Sen. *ibid.* 6, 5; 16, 6; 17, 3.
[117] Dio LX, 14, 2.
[118] Sen. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 13, 2.
[119] Dio LX, 16, 2.
[120] Dio LX, 12, 2.
[121] Suet. *Claud.* 13.
[122] Dio LX, 27, 5.

he made ready no army and collected no funds in advance, but was emboldened merely by his extreme folly, which led him to think that the Romans would submit to having him rule them on account of his family. But the chief cause was that he was a very small and ugly person and was therefore held in contempt, incurring ridicule rather than running any serious risk." At any rate, Claudius refrained from inflicting the supreme penalty which the culprit undoubtedly deserved. Dio's reason accords very well with the course of action which he reports the emperor to have taken in the following year with regard to certain alleged petty conspirators: "In the majority of instances he paid no attention to the charges, saying that it was not necessary to adopt the same defensive tactics against a flea as against a wild beast."[123]

In the famous trial of Valerius Asiaticus in 47 A. D.,[124] Claudius was much affected by the defense of the accused[125] and was disposed to acquit him, despite the fear and suspicion that had been inspired by Messalina and her tools. Moreover, it was only by persuading or deluding Claudius into believing that by allowing Asiaticus to choose his own mode of death he was really yielding to his promptings to clemency that Vitellius, the arch-accuser, finally brought about what was equivalent to a death sentence.[126]

At the time of the Messalina-Silian conspiracy Claudius showed signs of relenting even towards Messalina, after he had partially recovered from his anger and fear;[127] and, as has already been noted,[128] he appears to have been disposed to spare Mnester, the pantomimus, and possibly also the youthful Montanus on their plea that their familiarity with Messalina had been enforced upon them. According to Taci-

[123] Dio LX, 29, 4.
[124] Cf. Chap. IV.
[125] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 2, 3.
[126] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 3, 1; Dio LX, 29, 4-6.
[127] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 37, 2.
[128] Chap. V.

tus [129] he was "greatly moved by Mnester's defense and was besides disposed to mercy." It is possible also that the words *pronus ad misericordiam* are meant to describe his disposition at all times, not merely in this particular instance. His pardon of Suillius Caesoninus and Plautius Lateranus, not, however, significant in this connection,[130] have already been mentioned.[131]

In A. D. 52 Furius Camillus Scribonianus was exiled on the charge of having consulted the Chaldaean soothsayers regarding the death of the emperor.[132] The seriousness of the charge was enhanced by the fact that the defendant's father had headed the revolt against Claudius ten years before,[133] and Claudius very justly, it seems, imputed to himself great clemency in having thus twice spared the life of the younger Scribonianus.[134] He might very well have put him to death for his father's crime, as had been done by Tiberius with the children of Sejanus;[135] and his own offense, following upon that of his father, might well be considered to have merited the extreme penalty.

Perhaps the most remarkable instance of Claudius's clemency is that of the pardoning of Caractacus and his family. Caractacus had been the leader of the resistance in Britain since the Roman invasion in A. D. 43,[136] but was finally defeated and captured in 51.[137] With his brothers, his wife, his

[129] Tac. *Ann.* XI, 36, 3.

[130] Their pardon was in all likelihood due to the personal and political influence of their father and uncle, respectively.

[131] Chap. V.

[132] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 52, 1.

[133] See Chap. V.

[134] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 52, 2. Cf. Chap. V.

[135] Tac. *Ann.* V, 9, 1 (VI, 4, 1).

[136] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 33, 1; 36, 2; Dio LX, 20, 1.

[137] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 33-36, 1. Though this event is treated by Tacitus as occurring in the year 50, the phrase *nono post anno quam bellum in Britannia coeptum* (XII, 36, 1) establishes the date as 51 A. D., which is also the date of the inscription on the triumphal arch of Claudius. See *C. I. L.* VI, 920.

daughter and his royal clients, he was brought to Rome, where his name had become almost a byword, and forced to march in procession before throngs of people and the emperor and empress. To Claudius he is reported to have made a proud speech, but ended by practically throwing himself upon his mercy, reminding him that punishment would result only in his being destroyed and forgotten, but that pardon would make him forever an example, or memorial, of the emperor's clemency. "In rely to this," says Tacitus, "Cæsar granted pardon not only to Caractacus himself, but to his wife and brothers"; and apparently they were at once released from their chains.[138] Though probably not allowed to return to Britain, they appear to have spent the remainder of their life in freedom in Italy. Not inapt or unjust is the contrast which Double[139] draws between Claudius's treatment of Caractacus on the one hand and that accorded by Aemilius Paullus to Perseus, by Scipio to Syphax, by Marius to Jugurtha, and by Julius Cæsar to Vercingetorix.

[138] Tac. *Ann.* XII, 36-37.
[139] Double, pp. 186-189.

CHAPTER VII

Diagnosis and Conclusion

The clinical picture, or clinical history, of Claudius, as it may reasonably be developed from our consideration in the preceding chapters and from additional references in our ancient authorities, may be traced briefly as follows:

birth to 16th or 17th year

Claudius was probably born prematurely.

During almost all his childhood and young manhood he suffered from various obstinate troubles, the exact nature of which we are not told, with the result, as Suetonius puts it, that as his mind and body had been blunted, he was not thought fit for any public or private employment or function of any kind.

At an early age, probably from the time when he began to study at all, he was interested in his studies and gave a great deal of attention to them.[1]

He was brought up apparently not like other boys, but, probably because of his health, was kept under the general supervision and care of the women of the imperial household,[2] of Antonia, his mother, who openly despised him,[3] and of Livia, his grandmother, who rarely spoke to him and even in admonishing him did so by note or by messenger.[4]

Up to his fourteenth year, and even later, Claudius was under the particular authority and care of a special attendant, who, apparently according to instructions, treated him brutally.

[1] Suet. *Claud.* 3.
[2] Dio LX, 2, 5.
[3] Suet. *Claud.* 3.
[4] Suet. *l. c.*

At fifteen he presided, together with his brother Germanicus, at a gladiatorial contest given by himself and his brother, with his head muffled in a cloak-cape, or hood,—this on account of the ill health mentioned above, as we infer from Suetonius,—and for the same reason, on assuming the *toga virilis* at the age of sixteen or seventeen, he was carried in a litter to the Capitol at dead of night without the usual ceremonies attending such an occasion.

16TH OR 17TH TO 23RD YEAR

Whatever Claudius's defects, they were not so pronounced when he was at the age of twenty-one as to convince his great-uncle Augustus beyond peradventure of doubt that he was really unfit for a public career, though Augustus apparently decided later in the negative.[5] The old emperor expressed himself as doubtful whether Claudius was really sound physically and mentally, and he seems to have been haunted by the fear that he might do something that would bring derision upon himself and the imperial family. Thus, for example, he was not willing that he should be in the royal box at the public games, where he would be conspicuous.

When Claudius was somewhere between the ages of fourteen or fifteen and twenty-three, Augustus wrote of him that "in matters of importance, when his mind does not get off the subject, the really fine quality of his intellect is apparent," and he expressed surprise that Claudius could have pleased him so much in his delivery of a declamation, saying that he did not see how one who spoke so indistinctly in conversation could speak so distinctly in declamation. This was probably a reference not only to Claudius's speech impediment, but also to the superior clearness of his prepared speeches as opposed to what must have been the nervous inarticulateness and confusion of his extempore attempts.

At this time Augustus complained also of Claudius's lack of care, or of discrimination, or of a sense of the fitness of

[5] Suet. *Claud.* 4, end.

things in his choice of companions, and implied that his movements, bearing and gait were largely the result of association with these companions. It may be added that the companions referred to were apparently freedmen in the imperial household.

Probably to this period belongs also the incident which occurred at his first public reading of part of his history, in which Claudius showed inability to control his laughter.

Doubtless from the fact that he was not allowed to engage in any public activities such as usually fell to the lot of young princes connected with the imperial house, Claudius seems to have had at this time the reputation of being an idler.[6]

24TH TO 50TH YEAR

During the reign of Tiberius, that is, from his twenty-fourth to forty-sixth year, Claudius was considered by the emperor mentally weak,[7] treated rather as a child,[8] and kept in the background,[9] though the equestrian order and the senate were inclined to honor him and bring him forward; and "he never lacked attention from individuals or respect from the public."[10] Disappointed in his active hopes for a career, he went into retirement and probably with good reason "incurred the reproach of drunkenness and gambling in addition to his former reputation for idleness."[11] Toward the end of his reign Tiberius seems to have looked upon Claudius with greater favor. He mentioned him as a possible successor, though he still thought his mind below par, left him in his will a more honorable position than he had held in

[6] Suet. *Claud.* 5: "*super veterem segnitiae notam.*" Such a reputation seems to have been fastened upon anyone who refrained from active participation in public affairs. See Suet. *Dom.* 15; Sallust, *Jugurtha,* 4, 3-4. Cf. Champagny, 2, pp. 75-76.

[7] Suet. *Claud.* 6; Tac. *Ann.* VI, 46, 2.

[8] Suet. *Claud.* 5.

[9] See Suet. *Claud.* 5-6; Tac. *Ann.* III, 18, 4-7.

[10] Suet. *Claud.* 6.

[11] Suet. *Claud.* 5.

that of Augustus, and took pains to commend him, among the rest of his relatives, to the armies, the senate, and the Roman people.[12]

During the reign of Caligula, from Claudius's forty-sixth to fiftieth year, the latter was more in the public eye. At first the young emperor was disposed to honor his uncle, doubtless to please the people, whose sympathy Claudius seems to have had.[13] He appears to have spent considerable time at Rome, probably at the palace; but later Caligula openly made fun of him, even playing practical jokes upon him, and subjected him to public disgrace and indignity.[14] Claudius was also harassed by charges of conspiracy.[15] He himself afterwards said that he had feigned stupidity under Caligula in order that the latter might not be minded to put him out of the way as a dangerous rival.

50TH TO 64TH YEAR

In general appearance Claudius was good-looking and in face fine-looking when in repose. He was tall, without being lank, but cannot be said to have been of an athletic build or appearance; for his shoulders were narrow, his chest rather flat, and his face pale, thin and pinched.

Claudius's legs were represented in the statues as normal, and perhaps they were so in appearance. However, his knees were weak and gave way under him when he walked, and the unsteadiness was heightened when he ran. His gait was uneven, and he dragged his right foot. He was unable to stand long at a time, and on occasions of great stress or excitement it appears to have been impossible, or at least difficult, for him to walk. His peculiar gait is not limited to this latter period of his life, but dates certainly from early manhood and probably from childhood.

Claudius's arms also are represented in the statues as normal, but his hands trembled slightly and seem to have

[12] Suet. *Claud.* 6; Tac. *Ann.* VI, 46, 2.
[13] Suet. *Claud.* 7.
[14] Suet. *Claud.* 8-9.
[15] Suet. *Claud.* 9. Cf. Chap. V, n. 41.

been unsteady, or uncertain, in their movements. This affection dated probably from childhood, or early manhood, for Dio speaks of it as a result of his early ill health.

Claudius is represented as having a disproportionately powerful throat, the sterno-mastoid muscle appearing overdeveloped. It seems more than likely that this was due to the constant tremor, or twitching, of the head, which was tremulous at all times, but especially when Claudius made the least exertion or was under tension of any kind. This affection also dated probably from childhood, or early manhood.

In ordinary conversation and at times perhaps in reading, Claudius stuttered or stammered, apparently very badly, from the time he was a child. His voice too was rough, harsh, disagreeable, and perhaps not very strong.

Claudius was at least slightly deaf, or at any rate it was difficult for him to hear in times of excitement or confusion. It is possible, however, that he was deaf from childhood or as a result of early illnesses and that the tone of his voice is associated with this trouble.

In the portraits it is to be noted that the angles of the mouth are slightly retracted and that toward them clearly-marked furrows run down from the nostrils. The lips are not firmly set, but are slightly parted. Claudius suffered from the supersecretion of saliva or from inability to control its flow. This appears to have been particularly evident when he was in a fit of anger.

Claudius's brow was broad and of medium height. Its furrows and the frown, or drawn appearance of the eyebrows, give evidence not only of eye-strain, but also of physical and nervous strain. Claudius's eyes were unhealthy, probably chronically so, being bloodshot and at times exuding white matter,—this indicative of chronic conjunctivitis or inflammation of the tear sac,—and his sight was doubtless impaired. Some have characterized the expression of his eyes as dim or dull.[16]

[16] Cf. Bernoulli, p. 345.

After he became emperor, perhaps also before, Claudius suffered from recurring attacks of pain in the region of the stomach. The fact that they seem to have thrown him into fits of such depression that he even meditated suicide, suggests that the trouble was of the nature of nervous dyspepsia. It appears also that he was inclined to be flatulent.

Claudius was excessive both in eating and drinking, and his death, if we are to reject the belief that he was deliberately poisoned, seems to have been induced by some digestive trouble which attacked him after he had partaken heartily of his favorite dish, mushrooms.

Sexually Claudius had no perversions. He may, however, have been sexually precocious and have suffered from a morbid permanence of the sexual instinct. He seems to have been hypernormal, unusually excitable and susceptible sexually, rather than abnormal.

Claudius appears to have been a poor sleeper. His sleep at night was of not more than three or fours hours' duration, but he seems to have made up for it by taking a nap after eating and by dropping off to sleep at intervals during the day.

Claudius's general health, which formerly had been poor, was good after he became emperor, though he suffered from some digestive trouble, or nervous dyspepsia, and at the age of sixty-one, two years before his death, had an apparently serious illness, the nature of which is not known.

Claudius, if not brilliant, possessed certainly considerable intellectual ability, as is shown by the wisdom of his rule in general,[17] his wide learning,[18] literary ability,[19] facility in

[17] Cf., for example, Merivale, V, p. 460; Furneaux, Vol. II, Introd. pp. 24-34; Pelham in *Quart. Rev.* 202 (1905), pp. 536-541.

[18] Cf., for example, Suet. *Claud.* 3; 40-42; Tac. *Ann.* VI, 46, 2; XI, 24; XIII, 3; XIII, 14, 5; Dio LX, 2, 1; 3, 5; 26, 1-5; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 164 and 213; *C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, 1668.

[19] See Suet. *Claud.* 40-42. Cf. *C. I. L.* V, 5050; XIII, 1, 1, 1668; Plin. *N. H. Index Auct.*

Greek,[20] *etc.* His industry was tremendous,[21] and he was characterized by honesty, sincerity,[22] seriousness of purpose,[23] a sense of justice,[24] and a passion for detail and organization[25] and for reform.[26]

In fact, all of his pursuits and pleasures were marked by a certain exaggerated and almost morbid intensity and thoroughness. His literary and research work was voluminously productive;[27] he busied himself with details of his governmental organization;[28] he held court all day and every day, even on holidays, when there was need;[29] when he attended a gladiatorial contest he watched throughout the day, without even taking the usual noon recess; devoted to dice as a pastime, "he used to play even while driving, having the board so fitted to his carriage as to prevent his game from

[20] Suet. *Claud.* 42.

[21] Cf. Dio LX, 4, 3-4; 5, 7; 10, 3; 12, 1; 25, 8; Suet. *Claud.* 14; 16; 18; 41; Merivale, V, p. 460: "the laborious industry of the emperor himself tired out all his ministers and assistants."

[22] See Suet. *Claud.* 41, where it appears that his unwillingness to color his histories falsely caused him to give up writing about the period between the death of Cæsar and the beginning of Augustus's reign. See also Dio LX, 3, 7; 4, 5; 6, 3; 26, 1-5; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 11; 61, 4.

[23] Cf. notes 21 and 22.

[24] Cf., for instance, Dio LX, 3, 7; 4, 1; 4, 2; 5, 1; 6, 3; 6, 8; 8, 1 (cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 8, 1); 17, 2 (cf. Dio LIX, 15; Tac. *Ann.* III, 31); 24, 2-3; Suet. *Claud.* 14: *"nec semper praescripta legum secutus, duritiam lenitatemve multarum ex bono et aequo, perinde ut adficeretur, moderatus est";* Suet. *Claud.* 25 (cf. Dio LX, 29, 7^2); Tac. *Ann.* XI, 36, 1-3. Detracting somewhat from this evidence is the charge, for which there appears to be some foundation (see Chap. IV, n. 27), that Claudius often decided cases after hearing only one side or at times neither side.

[25] See Dio LX, 7, 1-4; 9, 5; 10, 4; 24, 1-3; Suet. *Claud.* 12; 25; Sen. *Apocol.* 8, 3. See also n. 26.

[26] See n. 25 and cf. Dio LX, 4, 1; 4, 3; 5, 6; 6, 3-7; 10, 2; 11, 6-8; 17, 1-3; 25, 1-6; Suet. *Claud.* 22-24.

[27] See n. 19.

[28] See nn. 25 and 26.

[29] Suet. *Claud.* 14; Dio LX, 4, 3; 4, 4; 5, 7; 25, 8.

being disturbed," and he actually wrote and published a book on the art of dice-playing.[30]

There are several characteristics which, in addition to the physical peculiarities already mentioned, gained for Claudius the reputation of being a fool. He was guileless,[31] easily influenced,[32] especially under stress of excitement or fear, impulsive and emotional, lacking in self-control and personal dignity, forgetful, or absent-minded, naïve, whimsical, and inconsistent. He reposed undue power and confidence in his wives and freedmen, was readily influenced by them, especially when they succeeded in frightening or confusing him; he was nervous and excitable, even in ordinary conversation; was easily confused and angered; and he oftentimes showed a lack of common sense and of a sense of proportion and of the fitness of things.

Claudius had a sense of humor by no means lacking in keenness, excepting perhaps in matters closely concerning himself; but he was inclined to carry it to excess and to use it inauspiciously. It was probably for this reason, in addition to his general reputation as a fool, that his humor seems rarely to have been appreciated as such, but was probably looked upon as either unconscious and unintentional or as an extravagance of the fool that he was thought to be.

Claudius was timid and cowardly. His fear, however, was not merely that normal initial fear which is present in all of us to a greater or less extent and leads to sensible, rational measures of self-defense or precaution. It was panicky, wild, excitable, rendering him at times *non compos mentis* and helpless physically as well. His timidity, or cowardice, was in great part physical, or nervous, and the effect produced upon him was much the same as that produced by other kinds of nervous excitement and resembled that of

[30] Suet. *Claud.* 33. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 5; Suet. *Vit.* 4; Sen. *Apocol.* 12, 2; 14, 4; 15, 1.

[31] See Chap. III, n. 1.

[32] See Suet. *Claud.* 29. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* XI, 28, 3: *"facilitas imperatoris"*; XII, 61, 4: *"solita facilitas"*; XII, 3, 3.

morbid fear, or phobia, which is paralyzing and agonizing. Apparently arising from perfectly natural causes, his fear seems to have become exaggerated, though not perverted, through excitement and to have resulted in abnormal reactions. In this, therefore, as in the case of his sexual instincts, he may more aptly be characterized as hypernormal. Claudius was also a moral coward and lacking in will-power, except in making decisions or taking steps which did not involve his personal safety or were unaccompanied by conditions of tension or excitement.

Claudius was extremely sensitive and self-conscious. He knew his own defects, or many of them, and he often spoke of them publicly, seeking to apologize for or to explain them. He was inclined to be quick-tempered and resentful, never forgetting a slight, but at times he was unduly patient and magnanimous, and it would seem that his irritability was not that of an individual who was habitually disagreeable, but rather of a man who was high-strung and sensitive, conscious of his weaknesses, and accordingly quick to take offense when he thought offense was meant.

Claudius was not without a certain conceit, self-importance,[33] and fondness for displaying his knowledge [34] and his achievements,[35] and he had a liking for parades and public ceremonies,[36] though in his life in general, in his personal bearing, in the honors that he allowed to be bestowed upon him, he was decidedly democratically inclined.[37] It must be noted that his pride and self-conceit were not of the nature of self-assurance. They were evident always in connection

[33] Cf. nn. 21 and 22; Dio LX, 21, 4-5; 23, 1-5; Tac. *Ann.* XI, 24, 1; XII, 11, 1.

[34] See Chap. IV, n. 74.

[35] Suet. *Claud.* 17; Dio LX, 23, 1-5; 25, 7; Eutrop. *Brev.* 7, 13, 2; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 23, 3-5; *C. I. L.* XIII, 1, 1, 1668, Col. I, 37-40; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 56; Dio LX, 33, 3.

[36] See preceding note and Suet. *Claud.* 21; 22; 32; Tac. *Ann.* XII, 36, 3-4; Plin. *N. H.* III, 119; IX, 14-15; Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 275.

[37] See Chap. VI, esp. nn. 61 and 62.

with some past act or accomplishment. Claudius boasted of what he had done in Britain,[38] but not of what he was at the time engaged in or of what he would do in the future. His pride was a sensitive pride, a defense against disrespect, a weak bulwark for his dignity; but it was not so great as to cause him to maintain his dignity. By his very assertion of this pride, or, rather, by his manner of assertion, he often lost the very dignity which he sought to protect.

The charge that Claudius was cruel and bloodthirsty is not without some justification. It seems to have arisen from his evident pleasure at times in actually witnessing suffering and bloodshed and from the number of executions that took place in his reign. On the other hand, he was notably mild, kindly, sympathetic, and lenient. The inconsistency may partly be reconciled by the very probable theory that his pleasure in witnessing suffering was rather of the nature of a morbid curiosity and interest and was due at times to great excitement, which led him to acts of cruelty for which he was probably at the time hardly responsible. Moreover, while Claudius was of course morally responsible in the highest sense for the great number of executions in his reign, it is sufficiently well established that they are not to be taken as indicative of deliberate, cold-hearted cruelty on his part, but rather of his moral weakness and pliability. Many of the executions were ordered by him when in a state of great fright and were afterwards repented of; many were ordered by his wives or freedmen without his knowledge or acquiescence and were afterwards upheld by him, probably as a matter of policy; and many were justified, at least according to the best thought of his time.

In striking contrast with the cruelty and bloodthirstiness charged against Claudius, is the existence of a trait, or combination of traits, which in general may be called his humanity. He seems to have craved and enjoyed human companionship without regard to class, to have had the greatest

[38] *C. I. L. l. c.*

affection for and loyalty to the members of his family and his friends, to have been generous, kind, considerate, and courteous, most grateful for any kindness to himself, magnanimous, on the whole, rather than malicious or vindictive, and disposed to clemency and mercy.

In the physical, mental and psychic characteristics cited above one recognizes readily, among considerations of minor importance, the presence of a disorder or combination of disorders connected with the nervous system. Most of the physical characteristics and probably most of the mental and psychic also, in an embryonic stage, at least, dated apparently from childhood. Certainly by the time Claudius was fifteen or twenty, as we learn from the letters of Augustus, he had his speech impediment, queer gait, grotesque manners, and the tendency to mental flightiness, or *meteoria*. Moreover, we are told that through almost all his childhood he was racked with obstinate illnesses which resulted in the impairment of body and mind and caused those responsible for him to feel that it was necessary to put him under the care of a special attendant even after he reached the age of fourteen. Accordingly, with such a clue, it is only reasonable that in our search for a diagnosis we should direct our attention to congenital disorders or disorders of infancy or childhood likely to have a very definite and lasting effect upon the patient's later life.

At the outset it is necessary to eliminate several diagnoses which have either been suggested by modern scholars or physicians or appear, on superficial examination of the clinical picture, to offer a possible solution.

The first question is whether there is any sound basis for the quite prevalent opinion [39] that Claudius was idiotic, imbecile, or feeble-minded. I am using the terms in their strict, scientific sense, as applicable only to persons whose mentality never advances, at the highest, beyond that of a child

[39] Champagny, 2, pp. 71 and 72; Beulé, p. 4; Wiedemeister, Introd. p. X; Domaszewski, pp. 39 and 45.

of twelve, to persons of permanently stunted or dwarfed intelligence.[40] It is quite true that many of Claudius's physical peculiarities are the stigmata of idiocy or imbecility,[41] and that he bears some of the psychic stigmata in his apparent defectiveness in will and judgment;[42] but these characteristics are easily explained on other grounds, and there are besides considerations which make idiocy or imbecility in Claudius's case extremely unlikely and practically impossible.

Among these considerations are the following: his early interest and proficiency in intellectual pursuits, his ability to write and speak both Greek and Latin well, his productivity in literary and historical work, his at times brilliant decisions in court, the general intelligence and efficiency of his reign, and the very considerable mentality plainly visible in his portraits.[43] Moreover, the evidence of Augustus's attitude toward Claudius is of great importance, and, I believe, convincing.

Certainly not later than 8 A. D.[44] Augustus took the trouble to betroth Claudius to his great-granddaughter Aemilia Lepida.[45] When this engagement was broken in 8 or 9 A. D.,[46] on account of the disgrace brought upon Aemilia by her mother's banishment for adultery[47] and also on account of her father's participation in a conspiracy,[48] he be-

[40] Goddard, *Feeblemindedness, Its Causes and Consequences* (New York, 1914), pp. 4 and 504.

[41] Régis, *A Practical Manual of Mental Medicine* (Eng. transl. by Bannister, 2d ed. Utica, N. Y., 1894), pp. 113-119.

[42] Régis, p. 112.

[43] Cf. Müller, p. 589; Ampère, p. 22.

[44] See Tac. *Ann.* IV, 71, 6-7; where, in recounting the history of the year 28 A. D., Tacitus mentions the death of Julia, Aemilia's mother and Augustus's granddaughter, who, he says, has been in exile twenty years. This would make the date of her banishment 8 A. D.

[45] Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[46] Suet. *l. c.* Cf. n. 44.

[47] Tac. *Ann.* III, 24, 5; IV, 71, 6; Suet. *Aug.* 65.

[48] Suet. *Aug.* 19. Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 26.

trothed Claudius again, to Livia Medullina Camilla,[49] of ancient lineage. She was probably the daughter of M. Furius Camillus,[50] who was consul in 8 A. D.,[51] and probably also the only heir of his name and family.[52] Camilla died, however, on the day set for the wedding, and Claudius was again betrothed, this time to Plautia Urgulanilla,[53] whose father, M. Plautius Silvanus, had been consul with Augustus in 2 B. C. and proconsul of Asia the following year, and had received the *ornamenta triumphalia* because of his deeds in 8 A. D. as *legatus* of Tiberius in the Illyrian war.[54] It is also significant, as showing perhaps that even Livia, despite her apparent contempt, had more than a passing interest in Claudius's marriage, that Plautia's grandmother, Urgulania, was a very close friend of the empress.[55]

Now it seems highly improbable, if Claudius was thought to be an idiot or an imbecile, either that Augustus would have kept him with him at the palace in Rome or would have taken pains to betroth him successively to three women of such birth and prominence. To be sure, after the adoption of Tiberius and Germanicus into the family of Augustus, Claudius was the only member of the household of the Cæsars on whom depended the continuation of his particular branch of the Claudian family, and it may be, as Lehmann[56] suggests, that Augustus's love for his dead stepson Drusus led him to be solicitous that Claudius should marry and marry well. However, there is little ground for believing that Augustus would have refrained from treating Claudius exactly as he treated Claudius's contemporary, Agrippa, his

[49] Suet. *Claud.* 26.

[50] See *C. I. L.* X, 1, 6561.

[51] See *C. I. L.* I, p. 548.

[52] See Lehmann, p. 88.

[53] Suet. *l. c.* That the betrothal, if not marriage, took place before 12 A. D., is shown by Augustus's letter to Livia already quoted, in which the son of Silvanus is spoken of as *affinis* to Claudius.

[54] See Rohden and Dessau, *Prosopographia,* III, p. 46.

[55] Tac. *Ann.* II, 34; IV, 21-22.

[56] Lehmann, p. 78.

own grandson and adopted son,[57] if he had thought him as hopelessly imbecile and idiotic as he thought Agrippa hopelessly disagreeable and intractable.[58] In fact, it is not improbable, if we may judge from the brief characterizations[59] that we have, that Agrippa was himself feeble-minded.[60] At any rate, he was banished in 7 A. D.[61] at the age of eighteen,[62] without having been betrothed to anyone, so far as is known, and was never recalled.[63] Moreover, if Augustus had wished to follow a similar course with Claudius, it is quite unlikely that there would have been any objection from any of the women or men of his family.[64]

It may be inferred even from Augustus's first letter to Livia that the emperor did not consider Claudius an utter idiot or imbecile. To be sure, he expressed grave doubt as to whether he was fitted physically or mentally for a political career; but it is inconceivable, if he had been really imbecile or feeble-minded, in the strictly scientific sense of the terms, that Augustus would not have recognized it unmistakably by the time Claudius was twenty-one years of age. Furthermore, there are indications that he was always looked upon as a possible future emperor. It is quite likely that Augustus had this possibility in view when he betrothed him to his great-granddaughter, Aemilia Lepida;[65] Livilla is mentioned

[57] See Suet. *Aug.* 65; *Tib.* 15.

[58] See Suet. *l. c.;* Dio LV, 32, 1-2; Vell. Paterc. II, 112; Tac. *Ann.* I, 3, 3-4. Tacitus (cf. also *Ann.* I, 5, 1-3; VI, 1-4) represents Agrippa as having fallen a victim to Livia's jealousy for Tiberius and as having been guilty of no crime. He admits, however, his rough and unattractive personality.

[59] See references in preceding note.

[60] Cf. Müller, p. 592.

[61] Dio *l. c.;* Suet. *Aug.* 65; *Tib.* 15; Tac. *Ann.* I, 3, 4.

[62] Agrippa Postumus was born after the death of his father in 12 B. C. See Dio LIV, 29, 5.

[63] See Tac. *Ann.* I, 5, 2-3; VI, 1.

[64] Cf. Suet. *Claud.* 3; 5; 6. Germanicus's feeling toward his brother is not known.

[65] Cf. Lehmann, p. 79.

as hearing that Claudius would one day be emperor;[66] it is known that toward the end of his life Tiberius thought of him as a possible successor;[67] and Caligula likewise appears during his reign to have been not altogether unsuspicious of him.[68]

It would therefore seem quite unlikely that Claudius either was or was looked upon as the idiot or imbecile which he has sometimes been made out to be. On the other hand, it is hardly necessary to go to the opposite extreme and picture him as the victim of a woman's intrigue whereby he was systematically and wilfully misrepresented and held in the background by Livia and Antonia in order to keep the way open for their respective favorites, Tiberius and Germanicus.[69] In fact, there is every evidence that Claudius was far from normal. Certain it is that the women of his family despised him and that Augustus had grave doubts,—and apparently made up his mind in the negative,—as to whether he was fitted for a public, political career as a member or close connection of the imperial family. However, this may all be explained and will be explained on far more satisfactory grounds than those of utter imbecility or idiocy.

The elimination of imbecility carries with it also, even if there were not several other reasons, the elimination of Cretinism,[70] which is suggested as a possibility by Groag.[71] Moreover, I am inclined to believe that the diagnosis of degeneracy proposed by Dr. Müller,[72]—if by that he means degeneracy properly so termed[73] and not the so-called superior degeneracy, or disequilibration,—is rendered unsatisfactory or unconvincing, if not impossible, by certain of the

[66] Suet. *Claud.* 3.
[67] Tac. *Ann.* VI, 46, 1-2.
[68] Joseph. *Antiq.* XIX, 13; XIX, 66-69.
[69] See Double, pp. 18-19.
[70] See Osler, pp. 768 ff.
[71] Pauly-Wiss. *Real-Encycl.* III, 2833.
[72] Müller, p. 589.
[73] See Grasset, p. 160.

reasons which operate in debarring imbecility. While it is true that Claudius possessed many of the physical and even some of the psychic stigmata of degeneracy,[74] it is well to point out that whereas degenerates are generally noticeable, according to Régis,[75] " for the slowness with which their intellectual evolution works," that whereas " their instruction is rarely complete, and they are, for the most part, obliged to give up their studies," Claudius, on the contrary, devoted himself to his studies from childhood, showed proficiency in them, and maintained his interest to the end. Moreover, he manifested such consistency of purpose in his literary work and in his attention to the duties of emperor as would hardly have been possible in a degenerate. For it is in serious things, in the practice of a profession, or the pursuit of a regular occupation that degenerates reveal their inferiority and incapacity.[76]

The diagnosis of insanity of a pronounced type,—not of so-called semi-insanity, which will be treated later,—is open to objection on several grounds. In the first place, it does not explain, except in a very general and unsatisfactory way, Claudius's physical defects. Moreover, it must be remembered that not only the physical, but also the mental or psychic peculiarities were present in Claudius in his childhood, and if they were evidences of insanity it seems inconceivable that the trouble should not have progressed and manifested itself in unmistakable form by the time of Claudius's death at the age of sixty-three. On the contrary, he seems rather to have gained in respect and reputation as time went on. Certainly Tiberius, who at the beginning of his reign had treated him as an imbecile, in his last days looked upon him with greater favor, though he still thought his mind below par. It is expressly stated too that Claudius's general health improved after he became emperor, and while

[74] See Régis, pp. 112-119.

[75] Régis, *Précis de Psychiatrie* (3d edit. 1906), quoted from Grasset, p. 160.

[76] Grasset, pp. 158 and 161.

it is possible to infer that the illness of the year 52, the nature of which is unknown, was the beginning of a decline in his physical health, there is certainly no evidence up to the day of his death of any marked decline mentally.[77]

But what is most suggestive, if not convincing, in this question, is the negative testimony of our ancient authorities. While Claudius is represented as a fool of varying grades, possessing many peculiarities and eccentricities, there is nevertheless no evidence of any hallucinations, delusions, outbursts of mania, or perversions as in the case of Caligula, for example, who was undoubtedly insane. In fact, we should have to exaggerate the already exaggerated statements of Suetonius and Seneca in order to find any reason at all for predicating insanity in the case of Claudius; and this seems unnecessary in the face of a diagnosis which I believe will prove more satisfactory and more reasonable.

The suggestion of epilepsy, persisted in by Ferrero[78] and others, is by itself certainly not a sufficiently inclusive diagnosis, and besides there is no direct and convincing evidence in its favor.[79] Ferrero appears to base his theory on Claudius's mind being ill-balanced, "as in certain epileptic

[77] Suet. *Claud.* 43-44.

[78] Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome* (Vol. 5, Eng. transl. by Chaytor, New York, 1909), pp. 273 and 304 f.

[79] It is possible that justification for the theory of epilepsy in Claudius's case has been sought in the fact that his son Britannicus was an epileptic (see Tac. *Ann.* XIII, 16, 5; Suet. *Nero* 33). Moreover, there are perhaps two incidents suggesting that Claudius was interested in cures for epilepsy. According to Suetonius (*Claud.* 34), his morbid pleasure in bloodshed is illustrated by his having small knives made out of the swords of two gladiators who had fallen from mutually inflicted wounds. His motive, however, may have been to test them as a cure for epilepsy; for according to Pliny (*N. H.* XXVIII, 34) game killed with a knife with which a man had been slain constituted such a specific. Lydus too (*De Mens.* 4, 104) records a letter to Claudius from one of his tribunes telling of the treatment of epilepsy by a concoction of the viscera of certain birds, honey, *etc.* Obviously, however, none of these considerations is convincing as indicating that Claudius was an epileptic.

cases"; and there are, to be sure, certain physical and mental symptoms at least suggestive of this trouble. However, they may be explained far more comprehensively and satisfactorily in other ways.

Indeed, I should be inclined flatly to deny the possibility of epilepsy in its major form, *grand mal,* in which fits, or convulsions, are a necessary concomitant.[80] The ancients were far too familiar with it in this form, at least, not to have noted it had Claudius been a sufferer; and while I should ordinarily hesitate to press an *argumentum ex silentio,* I believe it is valid here. On the other hand, I should not deny the possibility of the minor forms,[81] of *petit mal,* in which there is almost invariably transient unconsciousness, but no convulsions, nor of the so-called Jacksonian, or partial epilepsy, in which consciousness is retained or lost late. But here again there is no direct evidence nor even a suggestion which cannot be explained more satisfactorily in other ways, and for these reasons I feel justified in eliminating from our consideration the minor epilepsies also.

Attempt has been made to diagnose Claudius's case as one of alcoholism,[82] and it is true not only that there is ample testimony to his intemperance, but that his physical and mental symptoms are to a great extent identical, for instance, with those of chronic alcoholism and alcoholic neuritis.[83] It must be remembered, however, that Claudius's physical and mental peculiarities were present before he could possibly have contracted habits of intemperance, and the diagnosis of alcoholism is therefore obviously inadmissible in our search for a diagnosis which will explain his early condition. This of course in no way denies the probability that Claudius's habits had their effect upon his condition both mental and physical in later years.

[80] Osler, pp. 1058 ff.
[81] Osler, pp. 1062-1063.
[82] Kanngiesser, p. 91 (see Introd. n. 27).
[83] Osler, pp. 369-370; 1001-1002.

Finally, there are two diseases which are readily suggested as possibilities after a superficial consideration of Claudius's symptoms. They are *tabes dorsalis,* or locomotor ataxia, and *dementia paralytica,* or general paralysis of the insane.[84] Aside from all questions of the symptoms, however, they must be dismissed for two very good reasons. In the first place, they are essentially diseases of adult life, the great majority of cases occurring between the 30th and 50th or 55th years.[85] In the second place, while it is possible for them to occur in childhood as a result of congenital syphilis,[86] in Claudius's case the possibility is denied by the fact that the diseases are both progressive and degenerative,[87] and that if as a child Claudius had been a sufferer from either, it would have been impossible, so far as medical experience shows, for him to live to the age of sixty-three or to retain his physical or mental powers even to the extent to which he did retain them.

It is possible that the preceding eliminations may have appeared arbitrary, but they have been made only in the face of a diagnosis which has seemed more comprehensive and more fully in accord with the clinical picture as presented. This diagnosis, if we may call it a single diagnosis, may be divided into two parts. The first concerns itself more particularly with the physical symptoms, the second with the mental, or psychic.

It was casually suggested by Baring-Gould [88] that Claudius was paralyzed in infancy. I believe that he suffered from one of the forms of infantile spastic paralysis, or infantile diplegia, and that he bore the residual effects of the paralysis in after life. The symptoms of this trouble, differing but slightly in the various forms of the disease, are in general as follows:

[84] Osler, pp. 886 ff.
[85] Osler, pp. 886 and 896.
[86] Osler, *l. c.*
[87] Osler, pp. 894 and 900.
[88] Baring-Gould, p. 519, note. Cf. Merivale, V, p. 376.

Both sides of the body are more or less affected, but the paralysis may be much more marked, especially years after the onset, on one side than on the other. The lower extremities are usually most severely affected, the upper to a less degree, and the face still less. The affection is one of muscular rigidity, or stiffness, associated with weakness. Voluntary movement is slow and clumsy, and oftentimes irregular involuntary movements are present. The gait is digitigrade, that is, the patient shows a tendency to walk only on the forward part of the foot; the thighs are rotated inwards; and the knees, slightly flexed, rub against each other. At times there is the so-called "cross-legged" progression. In nearly all cases the face shows signs of paresis and rigidity. This may be indicated by a general loss of emotional expression, slight retraction of the eyelids, and some retraction of the angles of the mouth. Slobbering is common, and in some cases there is involuntary facial overaction giving rise to varying grimaces on attempts to move the face or in speaking. The so-called volitional, or intention, tremor is frequently present in the legs, arms, or head when the patient makes any exertion. In congenital cases and those occurring before the eighteenth month there is often imperfection of speech, consisting of defective articulation, slowness of speech, slurring, or stammering. "Every degree of mental defect is met with in these cases, from precocity and slight mental dullness to complete amentia"; but "the amount of mental impairment cannot be estimated from the facial expression, as conditions of facial overaction and rigidity, perverse mimetic or athetoid movements of the face, may lead to an opinion that there is much greater mental impairment than exists in reality." [89]

It will not be denied that these symptoms show a marked correspondence to those of Claudius, even to the point of

[89] Taylor, *Nervous Diseases in Childhood and Early Life* (London, 1905), pp. 86-93. Cf. Osler, pp. 910-912; Gowers, *A Manual of Diseases of the Nervous System* (3d ed., Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 495 ff; Gowers, *Diagnosis of Diseases of the Brain and Spinal Cord* (New York, 1885), pp. 169 ff.

accounting in large measure for the popular and mistaken opinion as to his mentality; and the diagnosis is strengthened and also more accurately limited and defined by a further correspondence. The causes of this disease are in the majority of cases abnormal labor, including premature birth, and, more rarely, the fevers and attacks of convulsions.[90] Certainly none of these causes could be denied in Claudius's case on the strength of the testimony of our ancient authorities, and for one in particular, that of premature birth, there is, as we have already seen, certain positive testimony, or at least suggestion.

On the assumption, then, that Claudius was born prematurely and that this resulted in paralysis, his trouble may more accurately be defined as paraplegic rigidity, or Little's disease, the particular variety of diplegia most frequently associated with premature labor.[91] The clinical aspect of this form of diplegia differs from the other forms only in that rigidity and paresis are much more marked in the lower extremities.[92] This is in keeping with the clinical picture as presented by our ancient authorities, for it is Claudius's gait which is mentioned most prominently among his physical peculiarities.

The prognosis is also interesting. In most cases of paraplegic rigidity the disease is not progressive and the subject tends to improve, the degree of improvement depending largely upon the mental condition, capacity for learning, *etc.*[93] While it is true that the term of life is usually short, the majority of sufferers from this trouble not reaching far into the twenties,[94] there is of course no invariable rule.

Before proceeding with the consideration of Claudius's mental or psychic symptoms, it is helpful to reconstruct or

[90] Osler, p. 910.

[91] Taylor, p. 94; Osler, pp. 910-912.

[92] Taylor, p. 94; Osler, pp. 910-911.

[93] Taylor, pp. 95-96 and 110; Gowers, *Manual,* pp. 496-497; Osler, p. 912.

[94] Taylor, p. 96.

supplement, in the light of the first part of our diagnosis, the clinical picture of his early years, of which there is only the vaguest suggestion in our ancient authorities. Born prematurely, Claudius probably had early and frequent attacks of convulsions, and at the time at which he should have begun to walk, talk, and show signs of intelligence and understanding, he appeared unable to use his limbs readily, had difficulty even in sitting up and holding up his head, and made grimaces of one kind or another in attempting to move his face or speak.[95] These symptoms were probably misunderstood for those of laziness and imbecility, and like the little Duke of Gloucester, Queen Anne's hydrocephalic child,[96] he was given the heroic treatment of corporal punishment and coercion as a corrective of his slothful tendencies. Premature birth also had made proper nutrition difficult, the child's digestion was poor, and he was consequently rendered more susceptible to the various childhood diseases. As he grew older the paralytic symptoms became less severe, but the residual effects were sufficiently revolting,—especially in that age and in the case of one closely connected with the imperial house, which claimed descent from the gods,—to make his own family ashamed of him and averse to having him display in public his unsteady legs, his trembling head and hands, and his grimacing countenance.

It may justly be claimed that the first part of the diagnosis, that of an early paralysis, satisfactorily explains Claudius's physical peculiarities, makes more comprehensible the general belief that he was not mentally sound, and actually discloses a possible source of whatever mental impairment may have existed. The question whether there was any actual organic mental impairment it is of course impossible to decide with certainty. So far as the diagnosis of paralysis is concerned, while such impairment is frequent, it is not inevitable; and in view of our evidence against insanity

[95] Taylor, p. 87; Osler, p. 911.

[96] Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne* (new ed. London, 1883), pp. 1-2.

or imbecility, of the new light in which the first part of the diagnosis has placed Claudius's mental peculiarities, or supposed defects, and of the results of our consideration in the preceding chapters, it is certainly not necessary to conclude that these mental, nervous, or psychic peculiarities were anything more than functional. To be sure, there is that vast border-land of insanity, the domain of the so-called semi-insane and semi-responsible, to which I should not be willing to deny that Claudius belongs, if indeed it is possible to admit the existence of such a border-land. He possessed certainly many of the characteristics of the so-called "superior degenerates," the persons who suffer from disequilibration, "who, although intelligent and sometimes even brilliant, are nevertheless lacking in some points, and who have certain defects which may be expressed by a lack of harmony and balance between their various faculties and propensities." [97] However, to the description of Claudius as a "superior degenerate" there is the same objection which has already been urged in connection with the question of degeneracy properly so-called. Even the superior degenerate, according to Grasset,[98] is incapable of practising regularly any profession or of accomplishing anything worth while. On the other hand, in the case of Claudius, while his peculiarities undoubtedly impaired his usefulness, or efficiency, they did not destroy it, even in the exalted and responsible position which he held; and he appears to have been able to perform his many duties, inconsistently, to be sure, but conscientiously, industriously, and oftentimes with uncommonly sound and broad judgment.

I believe, then, that Claudius was neither imbecile, insane, nor even in the border-land of insanity, in the strictly scientific sense of the terms. To be sure, in his characteristics and conduct there is evidence of a certain mental or nervous condition which led him at times to acts and processes of

[97] Grasset, pp. 156-157.
[98] Grasset, p. 158.

thought not consonant with normality; but I believe the index to this condition lies in the well-defined nervous tension and excitability so evident from our consideration in the preceding chapters. For the cause of this we have not far to seek. It seems more than likely that Claudius entered the world defective in "nerve force," with an inherited neuropathic predisposition.[99] Certainly his nervous organization must have been undermined by the ill health of his childhood and the ill treatment received not only in childhood, but in manhood as well. Misunderstood, treated by his own family with cruelty and contempt, constantly made conscious of his imperfections, unable because of his physical weakness and disabilities to assert himself, left a great part of the time to the care of freedmen, or servants, he must have acquired in childhood a feeling of inferiority and of inability to adapt himself to his proper environment. There is small wonder, therefore, that he became timid and easily frightened, self-conscious, sensitive, irritable at times, uncontrollable in his excitement, nervous and flighty in conversation or extempore speech, and queer and uncouth in his manners. In fact, Claudius's nervous tension and excitability are visible in practically everything that he did. Everything to him was a matter of great import and therefore exciting. The intensity and thoroughness which he showed in his pursuits and pleasures were largely the result of nervous energy. Even his fondness for food and drink may be taken, I believe, as another evidence of such intensity. He could do nothing by halves.

[99] Osler, pp. 1086-1087. While there is nothing to show that Claudius's parents were in any way neuropathic, perhaps it is well to call attention, as Kanngiesser does (p. 90), to the debilitating excesses of Mark Antony, Claudius's grandfather. Moreover, from the cases of his uncle Tiberius, of his nephews Caligula and Nero, and of his epileptic son Britannicus, there is evidence of nervous degeneration in the Claudian family, not to mention that noticeable also in the Julian family, to which Claudius was related through his grandmother Octavia, and in which family appear the epileptic Julius Cæsar, the nymphomaniacs Julia and Messalina, and the feeble-minded Agrippa Postumus.

It is hardly necessary to complete the picture from the point of view of the second part of the diagnosis: details have been entered into in the preceding chapters and a summary has been made at the beginning of this chapter. It may be well, however, to state briefly the main results of this study.

The diagnosis of early paralysis explains the greater number of Claudius's physical peculiarities and accounts for much of his reputation for imbecility. The necessity is thus removed for believing that there was any actual mental impairment. The probable cause of the paralysis, premature birth, might underlie other early childhood illnesses. The effects of the paralysis account for the maltreatment of Claudius at the hands of his family. This maltreatment, plus the weakness engendered by illness and the inheritance of a nervous capital perhaps none too strong, resulted in further injury to his nervous stability, and thus he became timid, excitable, nervously intense and high-strung. This tension and excitability were responsible in large part for his inconsistencies and his unusual conduct when under stress, especially in public. When the tension and stress were removed, Claudius was capable of thinking calmly and with good judgment, and the really fine quality of his intellect, as Augustus says, was sufficiently apparent. While Augustus was probably well justified in his final judgment that Claudius was not quite fitted for a political career, it is clear that his unfitness for such a career was due to the handicap of his physical peculiarities and his functional nervousness rather than to any actual organic mental defectiveness.

VITA

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